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# TH MU EUR T OF DD RN T Law less I

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1947 ONE SHILLING

IN THIS ISSUE: Why No Labour Films?; Documentary Radio; UNESCO Gets Going; Films and Medicine; News from Egypt and Malaya; Documentary Film Reviews; First Days of Documentary; Films and Micro-biology; Documentary Theatre; Notes of the Month



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# NOW IS THE TIME

In the field of public information there can be little doubt that the outstanding event of recent months is the UNESCO Conference in Paris. Matters 'educational, scientific and cultural' are the bricks with which the edifice of international understanding will eventually be built, and this latest attempt to lay down foundations is at once modest and imaginative—modest from financial compulsion and imaginative from the devotion and optimism of most of the delegates. An account of the programme of action in Mass Media which was adopted in Paris will be found elsewhere in this issue. In its insistence that help should be given to peoples ill-supplied with the means of mass communication it supports an old-established doctrine of the documentary movement; and in its references to the world-wide distribution through all appropriate media of informational themes of outstanding international significance, it touches upon a possibility which has long been a documentary pipe-dreamthe possibility that One World might, in times of crisis and need, be stimulated to think as one.

The British documentary film-makers who attended the Paris Conference in one capacity or another were stimulated (as they had been also during the course of the British Film Festival in Prague) to find that the post-war re-establishment of contact with fellow workers reveals a fortifying identity of view as to future needs and as to the contribution which the documentary method can make towards meeting them, not only in the field of film but in the whole area of information.

The documentary method—the 'creative treatment of actuality', as John Grierson defined it, is for international use on all class levels. It is as appropriate to the self-articulation of a leper colony as to the collaboration of Governments. Also it is for use in all appropriate media. Film is the medium which in the pioneering days lay handiest; it was adopted and, as a consequence, much critical attention has been concentrated upon it which might in part have been directed to comparable developments in other media.

The UNESCO 'Feature-story' project is a reminder that the Press not infrequently presents the story behind the spot news with all the dramatic and aesthetic devices of considered narrative and, in doing so, gives what might have been an ephemeral piece of reporting the deeper and more prolonged impact of literature. In literature itself there have been and will continue to be 'documentary' novels, where the lover and his lass take on the no less dramatic mantles and the enhanced stature of the world and his wife.

In this issue of *DNL* we draw special attention to the achievements of the documentary method in two other media—the theatre and radio. Montagu Slater writes of the creative treatment of actuality on the stage and Laurence Gilliam deals with feature production—that side of BBC work which has paralleled the development of the documentary film more closely than is generally realized.

The documentary film has learned from both these other media. The 'Living Newspaper' stage technique which made its debut in New York in the second half of the nineteen-thirties today demonstrates its persisting influence in such films as World of Plenty and Land of Promise, just as the multi-voiced commentaries of documentary and the unrehearsed screen interview are not oblivious of the achievements of the cameraless microphone.

Stage and radio, too, have borrowed from screen documentary and have often employed almost identical stories; and this is as it should be. Given adequate purpose in the theme, the particular medium employed can be left to derive from material circumstances. Aesthetes may object to this insistence on the pre-eminence of purpose, but let them in that case read the UNESCO programme. Here is a job to be done, urgent enough, exciting enough and potentially rewarding enough to encourage us to postpone for a while yet our trip to the end of the rainbow of art for art's sake, and to get busy instead with the employment of the documentary method wherever it is appropriate; and for social purposes which cannot wait for the arrival of the Muse.

# NOTES OF THE MONTH

#### The Role of Documentary

IN the Cobb Lecture to the Royal Society of Arts (part of which we reprint on a later page), Sir Stephen Tallents referred in his concluding remarks to the present position and significance of the documentary film. Amongst other things he made the following points, which we feel to be worth wider circulation:

'The outstanding factor is the growing importance of documentary. This is no place to discuss, in any but a few sentences, why the arts of public interpretation have in the last decade suddenly assumed such importance. There is no need in the closing months of 1946 to stress the extreme need for better understanding between the world's peoples. The opening words of the constitution of UNESCO put it well—"Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed". Within the British Commonwealth the need for better interpretation is surely even more urgent today than it appeared to the EMB when it started its work twenty years ago last May—and is still inadequately faced. Within our own coasts we have to meet the demand for helping a greatly increased electorate to understand what is being done, and what is proposed to be done, in their name and for their benefit by central and local government; to understand, too, the cooperation that is required of them. I am not clear that this need is even now clearly and imaginatively grasped in Whitehall. In local government, if you had met, as I did last Whit Monday, some 700 members of the National Association of Local Government Officers for a discussion of public relations, you would have understood how great was the need and how keen the desire to meet it among those who serve our local authorities. We still have the problem of making the fruits of scientific research more promptly available to those who should profit by them. We have unlimited opportunities of visual education and training. Each of these broad territories could be broken up into many specialized fields. In every one of them the documentary film, so largely independent of differences of language, so compelling to all of us who depend upon the eyes and the imagination, has a unique part to fill.'

#### Relations with Czechoslovakia

IN film circles generally and certainly for those British personnel who were present the outstanding professional event of 1946 was the Festival of British Films in Prague. The understanding and hospitality with which the British representatives were received has already become legendary and it is likely that the positive results achieved will be found to have significance outside the field of films. Plans are far advanced to hold in London a festival of Czech films and, although we are unlikely to equal the magnificence of the earlier occasion, it is to be hoped that the British Foreign Office and the film industry will realize that they are operating in the fertile and fateful field of international public relations.

#### Tyranny of the Dollar

'CAN the French film industry survive the agreement between the French and American Governments, and remain as an instrument of national expression for the French people?'

This question was raised by Hollywood's Screenwriters' Guild as soon as the terms of the French-American loan agreement were made known in July, 1946, and formed the basis of a very instructive correspondence between the Guild and Eric Johnston, president of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America. The following points emerge. The agreement passed a heavy sentence on French film-making, a fact that has received far too little publicity. French producers who asked for additional protection in the home market in the post-war period have in fact been given less than before. Be-

fore the war they produced some 120 feature films a year; they even managed to turn out 70 films a year during the occupation. Now they are screwed down to a probable maximum of 48, while Hollywood is free to bring in every American film dubbed into French. In return the wide open spaces of the United States are made as easy of access to the French as the moon. So much for Johnston's statement that 'the moving purpose behind the agreement was the desire to promote the ideal of world unity by removing some of the restrictions which isolate one nation from another'.

The violent reactions which the agreement produced in France have been equally inadequately reported in the press. The Screen-writers' Guild in their letter to Johnston quote a number of leading French film people, condemning the agreement and calling for its immediate revision. They did not mince their words. 'Hollywood has obtained from the representatives of France what the Nazis would never have dared ask of us during the occupation.'

#### Acts and Action

THE new Films Act is due at the end of this year. The various sections of the film trade have already prepared their several proposals for new legislation, while Hollywood is doubtless devising its stratagems. In the meantime the Board of Trade continues its attempt to improvise stop-gap measures. One of the principal problems is to give independent producers, of documentary as well as feature films, greater access to the screens. Whether steps like the recent setting up of a Government sponsored film selection board to arrange circuit distribution for 18 independently produced feature films a year, will have any real effect remains to be seen. At least it shows that the Board of Trade is alive to some of the implications of monopoly, so fully analysed in the Cinematograph Film Council's Report of 1944 on Tendencies to Monopoly. The least satisfactory aspect of such arrangements is the way they are made to depend on the courtesy of the big film combines. The agreement which Dalton concluded with the circuits in 1944 limiting their further expansion was purely a gentlemen's agreement resulting from an exchange of letters. When challenged on this point Government spokesmen have repeatedly stated that further and more definite action must wait on the introduction of more comprehensive legislation when the new Films Act is framed. Now then is the time to be taking them at their word and to be thinking of the measures which can be introduced in 1948 to ensure that the public has more opportunity of seeing in the cinemas the better films that are or can be produced.

#### D.N.L. Changes

Documentary News Letter welcomes to its Editorial Board Sinclair Road, organizing secretary of the Federation of Documentary Film Units. Road belongs to the younger generation of documentary workers but already has made his mark. He is respected both in the counsels of the important documentary production companies of which his Federation is composed and amongst the officials of the bodies with whom the Federation negotiates. He has recently published some effective articles on documentary problems which add freshness to the more tradition-ridden effusions of his older colleagues.

At the same time we must reluctantly remove from our list of Board members the name of Arthur Elton who retires, temporarily we hope, to pursue his Film Centre duties in Germany. Elton, acting on behalf of the Central Office of Information, is to take charge of film affairs in the British zone of Occupied Germany. For the greater part of 1946 Elton was representing Film Centre in Copenhagen where he was invited to advise the Danish Government in the production of a group of documentaries which will shortly be available for international distribution.

# UNESCO'S WORLD PLANS

# Programme of work in the Mass Media-Films, Radio and Press

Unesco's plans for film, radio and Press have been evolved with due regard to two essential factors. Firstly, an admittedly slender budget, and, secondly, the incontrovertible fact that no international organization can succeed unless it is backed fully and on the most practical level by the Governments of the member States and by groups and organizations within the member States.

The programme is therefore divided into three sections:

A: Projects for 1947 (in order of priority).

B: Stimulation.C: Direct Services.

# A: Projects for 1947 (in order of priority)

(1) 'As a first and pressing measure', the appointment of three Commissions on Immediate Technical Needs, to find out what is required as regards raw materials (film-stock, cameras, projectors, radio transmitters and receivers, printing machinery, pulp, paper, etc.) by countries in Europe and the Far East which have been hard hit by the war. These Commissions will report by June 1947, with proposals for immediate action, and long-term plans for ensuring continuous improvements in the supply to 'Have Not' countries of equipment and technical personnel.

At the same time UNESCO will institute a scheme under which countries with the best technical resources in the Mass Media will help the less-favoured countries by training guest-personnel in the various fields. The host countries (or, if they refuse, UNESCO itself), will do this by means of fellowships set up either by Govern-

ment or non-Government bodies.

(2) A comprehensive report on obstacles to the free world-flow of information and ideas. This will be carried out in co-operation with the Commission on Human Rights, and will deal with 'all restrictions on the flow of information and ideas across international boundaries, and with the suppression and distortion of

information and ideas by any influence.'

(3) Surveys of the Mass Media. A UNESCO-appointed Committee of Experts will study—according to the real needs of all peoples—the current proposals for a World Radio network. UNESCO will also undertake a 1947 Survey on Press and Films, making a factual analysis of their present world structure. As regards films, the Survey's terms of reference will include (a) Themes and distribution of films, both features and shorts; (b) Content and subject matter of newsreels; (c) Recent techniques for using films, film-strips and related visual media, with special emphasis on education, on the discussion of social relationships, on the appreciation of the arts, and on rural needs; (d) Possibilities of improving the sound film so as to overcome language difficulties.

(4) A comprehensive study of copyright problems, with special relation to the proposed world copyright conference in 1947.

(5) UNESCO will collect ideas of international significance and will stimulate their use in feature films, radio programmes and Press features. It may encourage awards (made by outside organizations, not UNESCO) for successful features based on these ideas. This project will, in effect, be an International Ideas Burean. There is also to be a World Feature Story Project, by which UNESCO will arrange for leading research men, writers, radio and film producers to cooperate in presenting a major story of world interest and importance in all the media simultaneously. Possible subjects already listed are: The education of children in a war-stricken country (in terms of international co-operation); the 'T.V.A.' scheme for India; the Moscow Art Theatre; and, later, the proposed Amazon development scheme.

The International Forum will be a series of discussions on inter-

national subjects by well-known figures from all over the world syndicated throughout the world in the Press and on national radio networks.

A special scheme for radio, to be called the World University of the Air. In this UNESCO, by consulting with national broadcasting bodies, and making the necessary arrangements (including the provision of texts and transcriptions where needed), would arrange a world-series of talks by the greatest authorities in the fields of education, science and culture.

(6) UNESCO will co-operate with UN in the proposed World Conference of Journalists, with special reference to the unification of journalistic rules and practices, and to the status of foreign correspondents.

(7) UNESCO will, of course, press for the universal acceptance and ratification (by non-member as well as member States) of the new Convention for ensuring the free international passage of approved educational, scientific and cultural films.

# **B**: Stimulation

(1) UNESCO will stimulate (a) the supply of suitable films to deficiency countries in relation to their needs, and (b) a conference called to aid the reconstruction of educational broadcasting.

(2) UNESCO will concern itself with the international aspects of Press and publications generally, including particularly organized goodwill tours by journalists, children's papers, standard classes in journalism for children and teachers, and the production of genuinely international publications.

(3) The formation of Institutes of Scientific Information is envisaged in the member countries. UNESCO will in due course act as

clearing house between these Institutes.

(4) Similarly, National Visual Councils will be promoted, whose job it will be to ensure film and film information services for educacational and other commodity organizations. They will also express the needs of these organizations to producers at home and, through UNESCO, to producers overseas.

(5) In co-operation with existing International Film Bodies UNESCO will help to form an International Film Council, repre-

senting film interests of all kinds in all countries.

# C: Direct Services

(1) In order to prevent overlapping and to ensure economy UNESCO is helping to form a United Nations Film Board, which will co-ordinate all the film work of the special agencies of UN (e.g. FAO, WHO, ILO, etc.).

(2) UNESCO is to be a clearing house for basic materials on UNESCO subjects for the world Press, and will provide information

and materials accordingly.

(3) UNESCO will similarly be a clearing house for radio information, and will in particular collect information on programme

techniques and new developments.

(4) Again, UNESCO will be a clearing house for information about films, film-strips and other visual media, with special reference to health, food, agriculture, social and economic problems, education, science and the arts. It will promote in all countries common methods of collecting and cataloguing information.

On this basis UNESCO will (a) provide each country with facts and information from all other countries, (b) organize (through national bodies) demonstration exhibits which will show the use being made of the visual media in education, science and the arts; and (c) will show producers what new films are required, and assist in their supply.

# WHY NO LABOUR FILMS?

# DOREEN WILLIS, in this hard-hitting article, challenges the Unions, the Co-ops and the documentary film makers alike

FIVE YEARS of DNL back numbers can produce only a few column inches of space devoted to films and the Labour Movement. The ease with which an organized audience of eight million trade unionists and nine million Co-operative families has been ignored is almost breathtaking.

From a movement priding itself on its presentation of social problems and activities more is required than observation and truthful portrayal. The 'creative interpretation of actuality' implies more than photographing sweaty faces, slum housing and the gyrations of machines. The individual worker and housewife are now a familiar sight on both theatrical and non-theatrical screens and the earnest picture-goer may well have amassed quite a wealth of information about the work men do in this modern Britain, from Grierson's herring fishers through to the scientific worker processing DDT. But what of the worker in the aggregate, in the millionsstrong movements which express his special needs and aspirations? We've not seen him on the screen yet—or at any rate only in the briefest of

Documentary has a proud record. Its films have helped to orientate people to the complex workings of industrial society while assisting them in the fight for a better deal. Its best films have been those which performed these functions consciously and in which the film makers had a real opportunity to grapple with a definite problem, such as housing, malnutrition, etc. Something of the strength and confidence of the people in action has been assimilated into these films, and it is this vitality (inspiration if you like) which the Labour Movement can offer to all the social arts, including documentary.

However, the economics of documentary film making being what they are, nothing so ephemeral as inspiration will suffice to ensure the production of films with social validity. This hard fact explains, though does not condone, much of the apparent lack of interest in Labour problems which shows through the columns of DNL. Have not the unions, for example, ignored documentary just as consistently? Certainly few films have been sponsored by unions, while the output of the Co-operative Movement has been ludicrously below its potentialities. Again, can it be claimed that the Labour organisations have exhibited the interest in this new educational and propaganda force that one would expect of a forward-looking movement? Unfortunately no. Financial problems have created for both users a

This provides documentary with one of its major problems. It might have been hoped that the advent of a Labour Government would automatically have solved it by opening out new vistas of social film making and by illustrating through its example the role which films can play in the carrying through of a vast programme of social reform. In practice the Government seems happily embarked on a modest programme of films dealing with the technical aspects of production, instruction, reconversion, etc., which, convinced of the value of the film. No union

barrier which good sense and ideological con-

viction have hitherto failed to surmount.

though valuable and necessary, cannot fail to be pedestrian if viewed from the standpoint of social documentary.

Can we afford, as citizens, to settle down to a life of pseudo-peaceful reconstruction? Have all the great problems and conflicts vanished with the ending of the war and the election of a new Government? One great section of the people doesn't think so anyway. Meeting recently, the Trades Union Congress expressed strong feelings on a variety of issues of acute interest to us all. They weren't altogether happy about the prospects of peace; they were alarmed at the survival of large remnants of Fascism; concerned about the use of atomic power; and fed to the teeth with being exhorted to increase production while many elementary trade union rights are still unrealized and the prospect of a world slump

Hasn't documentary something to say on these questions? Of course it has, but the problems still remain of how to get films of this type sponsored and then how to show them to the people most interested and responsive. A beginning has been made in the trade union sponsorship of films, first with the Amalgamated Engineering Union film, Unity is Strength, and more recently with those commissioned by the Electrical Trades Union and the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers. The ETU film is particularly important because it is attempting to tackle a subject wider than its own work-the social implications of electricity. It will be good to see what the electrical workers feel about this subject and the proposals they have to make for the development of this type of power. But many other equally fascinating subjects present themselves. Recently we have seen a Crown film dealing with the railways as a career for young people, and the competent, objective handling of the material compelled our admiration. But the idea which remained in our heads long after seeing the film was horror at the low wage rates being offered to men on whose skill and judgment the lives of the travelling public depend (a living wage appeared to be paid only to those responsible for the handling of the financial side of the railway service!). What do the railmen themselves think of their calling as a career? What will they demand of a publicly owned transport system? We ought to have a film about that. And so we could go on, listing the films we should like to see but which only the Labour Movement can sponsor.

Superficially it appears that the Co-operative Movement has gone further, but comparison between its vast resources and its actual output of films presents a different picture. We have had a spate of short advertising films of indifferent quality, but few films of a fundamental character. Surely the time has come for the building up of its own documentary unit by the Co-op and for the turning out of a series of films on social subjects close to the interests and ideals of co-operation.

But sponsorship of films by the Labour Movement can come only if the individual worker is executive will agree to the considerable expense involved unless it is confident that the expenditure will be approved by the membership.

In bringing films to the unions there is much to be learnt from Canadian experience. There is nothing magic about the way in which trade union circuits were built up over there: just a good deal of thought and considerable organization. Having appreciated the importance of this audience, the first job was to sell the idea that films could help trade unionists. This was tackled with imagination and enterprise and resulted in the production of some first-class publicity material, including posters and a regular news sheet. It was understood that union film shows must not be stunts, for these would soon pall, but must become an integral part of branch activity. So films were woven into the normal fabric of union educational work, and, with the co-operation of the Canadian WEA, a technique of discussion shows was developed. Out of this experience came the production of special discussion trailers in which ordinary trade unionists gave their point of view on the main film and developed a controversy which could be continued by the live

Trade union and co-operative interest in documentary can only be achieved from a study of their real needs and interests rather than from abstract appeals or aggrieved bemoanings that the Labour Movement 'doesn't appreciate films'. As a matter of fact, when the unions, for example, have been approached and told something about the films which exist and the free distribution facilities, they have shown a marked interest or even enthusiasm. This is expressed in an increasing number of articles in union journals and in the beginnings of branch film shows. In Glasgow an interesting development has been the formation of a Trades Council Film Society, which is showing mainly documentary films. At least this is a start.

The Central Office of Information has also a big opportunity to encourage not only the showing of films in the union branches, etc., but also the sponsorship by Government Departments of films having a more direct reference to the problems of Labour. The establishment of the National Film Association by the Co-operative Movement is a significant step forward, though it will need to break decisively with Workers' Film Association traditions of planlessness, inefficiency and preoccupation with profit making, if it is to realize its vast potentialities. It is also to be hoped that the International Labour Office will now implement the decision to carry out a programme of film making which was held up by the war. One must not forget, in this connection, the opportunities which face the World Federation of Trade Unions in fostering the exchange of films on national Labour achievements and the sponsorship of films dealing with common international problems.

These developments, though still in their first beginnings, mean great possibilities for the documentary movement. What is it prepared to do about them?

At the Pasteur Institute in France amazing new techniques are used to film operations on organisms so tiny that they have plenty of room to romp inside the eye of a needle. J. V. DURDEN here gives an expert's view to these new developments in

# FILMS AND MICRO-BIOLOGY

tr is a pleasure to see fresh examples of the use of the film as a tool in the hands of biological research workers. It is with the complexities of the living processes, both in the study of the plant and the animal kingdoms, that the film really comes into its own as the recording medium par excellence. What is even more gratifying is to see the supreme skill with which the difficult problems of ciné-micrography have been solved by Dr. Comandon and M. de Fonbrune of the Département de Cinémicrographie of the Pasteur Institute, in the films recently presented at the British Council by M. de Fonbrune.

The subject of this series of films is Mierobiology, the microscopic study of some of the smallest units of living matter. The object of the research was the elucidation of certain little-understood phenomena difficult to comprehend by the more normal methods of visual observation. Seven films were shown:

- (1) Caryocinese.
- (2) Amoeba Verrucosa.
- (3) Phagocytose.
- (4) Technique de Micromanipulation.
- (5) Substitution de Noyaux D'Amibes.
- (6) Champignons Predateurs.
- (7) Lankesterella.

In the first film we see time-lapse records of the phenomenon of karyokinesis, the reactions of the nucleus during the process of cell division. In living material, as opposed to fixed and stained micro-preparations, the nucleus is, in most cases, by no means easy to see.

The time-lapse technique, coupled with brilliant photo-micrography, demonstrates conclusively the extreme value of the cinema for this

type of investigation and record.

This sort of thing has been done before, notably in the work of the late Dr. Canti and in some of the films photographed by the late Percy Smith; but never has the quality of the result approached these new efforts from the workers at the Pasteur Institute.

#### Feeding the Amoeba

The second film is an attempt to gain information on the mechanism of ingestion of foodparticles by the single-celled organism amoeba. It had long been thought that the food penetrated the protoplasm of the organism by some purely physical means, such as capillary attraction. That this was not so was shown clearly many years ago in a film by Percy Smith in which amoeba was shown itself to display the most energetic activity in the matter of eating its food, the pseudopodia advancing round and trapping quite active micro-organisms. In this Pasteur film the amoebae were fed with quite large algae, many times longer than the amoebae themselves. The protoplasm of the amoeba was

clearly shown to exert a considerable force on the alga, appearing to pull it from within as a pseudopodium advanced along it, and coiling the threadlike alga up like a spring within the cell; so great was the tension of this spring that, in some instances filmed, it exceeded the eohesion of the protoplasm and burst out of the amoeba on the opposite side to that on which it was ingested. This sudden cruption in no way incapacitated the amoeba, which was able immediately to go on feeding on another alga.

#### Blood Football

The third film in this series is a spectacular demonstration of the bacteriocidal activities of the white corpuscles in the blood. It opens with a time-lapse shot of blood showing the normal state of the leucoeytes in which they wander at random amongst the red corpuscles.

Then small aggregates of bacteria are introduced into the blood; immediately the leucocytes cease their aimless wandering and converge on the interlopers like the players converging on the ball on the football field. They ingest the bacteria and then disperse once more.

The technique of darkground illumination is particularly good in this film causing the white corpuscles to stand out elearly and in brilliant contrast to the red corpuscles. It should be pointed out that to achieve such a striking picture as is presented here, the blood must be treated so that it contains a higher percentage of white corpuscles than normal.

#### Too Many Clocks

It is a pity that the time-lapse sequences in all these films are marred by the introduction of a clock face recording the degree of speeding-up of the observed action. This device, used many times before, has always been a source of distraction to the viewer and adds nothing to the value of the scene. While realizing that the timing of the recorded phenomena is of vital importance to the research worker, we feel that it would be preferable, and not difficult, to photograph the timing device on the portion of the film normally occupied by the sound track so that it would be masked off during projection.

#### The Micro Forge

The second part of this extremely interesting show was devoted to the exposition of another specialized technique used in micro-biology, namely micro-manipulation. It is possible to perform delicate operations on microscopic organisms by what is known as micro-dissection. For this work, two ingenious instruments have been devised by M. de Fonbrune, the microforge and the micro-manipulator; the former is for making the required tools and the latter for

using them. Both these instruments were demonstrated in the next film. Unfortunately the filmic exposition was not too good, and one was left with a rather hazy impression of their mechanics and operation. However, the section dealing with the making of the extremely fine implements used in micro-dissection, which is actually done under the microscope, was very clear and gave a good idea of the potentialities of the micro-forge.

The three remaining films were of subjects which could only be tackled with the help of the micro-manipulator. First came the removal of the nucleus from the living cell of an amoeba, showing the subsequent reactions of the organism; its normal activities are inhibited and it behaves quite irregularly, being unable to move properly, feed, or reproduce. Nevertheless it remains alive for some considerable time after this drastic operation. More remarkable still is the implanting of another nucleus into a disorganized amoeba which has been deprived of its own some hours previously; incredible though it may seem, the cell recovers and the creature resumes its normal behaviour as if nothing whatever had happened to it.

#### A Strange Fungus

A strange soil-dwelling fungus provides the subject for the second example of micro-manipulation. This organism, given the right conditions, develops peculiar rings on its hyphae with which it can snare minute but active nematode worms. There are not many plants which are carnivorous, and they are all amongst the higher plants, nevertheless this microscopic and lowly fungus manages to equal their skill in trapping active prey.

It is shown in the film how irritation of the inner surfaces of the three cells of which the hyphal rings are composed, causes immediate expansion inwards of the cells thereby restricting the central aperture of the ring. This irritation is produced artificially by rubbing with a microneedle.

When the same irritation is caused naturally by the nematode entering the ring, the worm is caught by the sudden constriction of the aperture and is eventually digested.

This phenomenon, which one might wait years to observe naturally, was brought about for the purposes of the film by holding the worm in a micro-pipette and inserting the creature into the deadly noose.

The last film shows the puncturing of the corpuscles of the blood of a frog which were parasitized by the organism linkesterella. The liberation of the parasite is seen, and the ease with which it penetrates the tough envelopes of other corpuscles.

Dr. Comandon and M. de l'onbrune are to be congratulated on their efforts, and it is to be hoped that we shall see more work of the calibre of these films in the future.

# BRITISH MEDICAL FILMS

# A study of the evolution of the medical film in this country

by Brian Stanford, M.R.C.S., D.M.R., F.R.P.S.

CINEMA and roentgenology both became a practicable proposition at about the same time, and both were applied to medicine early in their evolution; in 1895 roentgenology was discovered and immediately applied in medicine, and in 1897 Schuster recorded the movements of some of his patients while walking in an attempt to analyse their defects. (It is interesting to remember that Muybridge in 1872 made the first attempt at cinematography in order to analyse the leg movements of the galloping horse.)

Yet cinematography in medicine did not catch on, for it was of no such value in diagnosis as was roentgenology, and it was not until the early 1920's when the cinema had become a universally accepted ancillary of modern civilisation that medicine again looked at this medium and tried to use it for itself. This renewal of interest was facilitated by the popularization of the substandard gauge film (9.5 mm. was introduced in 1912, and 16 mm. in 1923) which allowed the camera to be made sufficiently small to be handled by one man, and the cost of film to come down to the range of one man's pocket. Films had been made before this by individual surgeons, but projectors were expensive and so the films were rarely used. Another equally important cause of the re-awakening interest was the increasing use of non-inflammable film (introduced in 1909) which enabled the private individual to give film shows in his home or school without taking the extensive precautions needed for projecting ordinary nitrate film.

#### Two Groups

Broadly speaking, two groups of practitioner became enthusiastic supporters of this new medium; the surgeon who wished to demonstrate repeatedly and at ease techniques which he performed only rarely, and the teacher of physiology who preferred the certainty of a film demonstration of an experiment to the vagaries of his biologic material for a demonstration—the subsidiary consideration that a film demonstration saves an animal for another experiment was probably not so important as it might seem.

Now these two classes, who make films for much the same basic reason, do so in different circumstances; for the physiologist can take surgical risks, can neglect the finer shades of aseptic technique, can repeat the experiment until an adequate record is made, and can personally supervise the cameraman. Not so the surgeon; he must place the safety of his patient before everything else, and he must give his undivided attention to the operation, leaving it to somebody else to make the film. And so we have today a number of amateur films which show physiological experiments crudely (in terms of photography) but satisfactorily in terms of teaching; while the corresponding amateur surgical films are in the majority of cases worthless for teaching purposes simply because the cameraman did not know what he was recording—what was significant and what he could leave out.

Physiologists, we have seen, bought their cameras and their film, made their records, and were content. Surgeons bought their camera and their film, were unable to make the record themselves, were discontented with the results other men made for them with their apparatus, and so turned to Messrs. Kodak, who had supplied their equipment, for help. In 1929 the Kodak Medical Film Unit was established to make photographic records for surgeons. This pioneer unit, under the direction of Mr. W. Buckstone, did valuable work and made a large number of films. But it suffered from the lack of a medical man on the staff; the records were all made by photographers who learnt medicine as they went along, who were ignorant of what they wanted to photograph, but who were assumed by the surgeon to know their job. Effective liaison between surgeon and cameraman was rare, and the records they made are mostly poor quality; the area of interest in the picture is usually too small to show adequate detail, for the cameramen, feeling ill at ease in an operating theatre, preferred to hold their cameras in their hands than to place them rigidly on a tripod, and were therefore precluded from using long-focus lenses; for the same reason the pictures are often out of focus, and continuity further destroyed by the film being made from a number of different angles, selected at random. Nevertheless, with purchases from other countries, the Kodak Medical Film Library grew until it is now the largest specialized medical collection in the country, and by the early 1930's substandard cinematography was sufficiently widespread for several drug houses to found small libraries of films which they loaned out to medical meetings, often supplying a lecturer as well.

#### Catalogues

In 1933 the League of Nations Health Organization, at the suggestion of the International Institute of Educational Cinematography (formed at the suggestion of the Italian Government in 1928) decided to prepare an international catalogue of films. Great Britain, a participant member of the International Institute, went ahead with this work, and in 1936 the British Film Institute published its first catalogue of medical films, with a supplement issued in 1938. Unfortunately, the rise of Fascism prevented the full programme of the International Institute from maturing, but this B.F.I. catalogue remained until very recently the only available catalogue listing films held by individuals or small groups in Britain (it is now out of print).

The Royal Society of Medicine, which had installed a 35 mm. projector as long ago as 1912, acquired substandard projectors in 1930; and by now it was becoming fashionable to illustrate an address to a medical audience with films. Looked at today they appear to have been made, one cannot help thinking, to show surgical skill almost as often as to demonstrate techniques; for instance, there now exist at least four-

teen films illustrating the operation for Caesarean section, not one of which shows sufficient detail for training a student. It is a spectacular operation with an obvious return for one's work; and was probably chosen in many instances as a trial by a surgeon to see what cinema could do, but the results are certainly discouraging. Yet this experimentation was not without value; lunchtable talk must have roused the interest of the physician, for neurologists were quick to see the value of this medium for teaching their students.

#### Getting Going

The films they made are often crude, but better than the surgeons, for once again they have time, can supervise the cameraman, and can take a repeat shot if the first is unsatisfactory. A number of useful films were made in this way, both at Edinburgh and Sheffield between 1930 and 1938. And now we are in the immediate pre-war years; colour film is becoming reliable, and students interested in photography are beginning to take active interest in producing films for teaching themselves and their colleagues, Experimental units at Ashford and Manchester, financed for the most part by a surgeon, staffed and equipped by the students themselves, are producing better films. They know what they are recording; theatre ritual and technique holds no terror for them; they have discussed in detail just what they want to show, and coached the surgeon to make sure he shows it; and just as they are all set to produce valuable films, it is already 1939.

#### The War Years

Now the whole picture alters. Film stock for amateurs is scarce, time scarcer, facilities nil; the amateur, just feeling his strength, is eclipsed, qualifies hurriedly, and is called-up. But in wartime, the health of the nation is important; "health" films-dealing with vitamins, crèches, canteen problems, first-aid-are wanted to inform the public quickly and in an attractive manner of the facilities that are available to them. Professional film units are called in to make these films, and they find the subject interesting, make good films. Almost overnight it becomes obvious that many if not most of the films previously made for medical training are obsolete. The British Council in 1943 finances at great expense two excellent films on medicine, carefully made by film experts collaborating closely with doctors. But the purpose of these films is not clear; beautifully made, they have little use, and the British Council instead of profiting by the experience and going ahead, makes little progress in this field. But 1.C.I. sees the value of good film technique coupled to good medicine, and in 1944 sponsors a series of eleven films on anaesthetic techniques, designed for medical students and nobody else; and now the page is finally turned: there can be no going back: medical films will in future be judged by the standard of these Realist Film Unit productions, until an even better series is made. The film profession has invaded medicine, and medicine has invaded film, and that is where we are today.

What will follow? Films of this type are expensive; very expensive by the old standards. A thirty-minute talkie will cost £5,000 at the very least. No individual can afford that, and no group exists to administer joint funds. Some coordinating scheme must be produced on a nation-wide basis.

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# FILMS IN MALAYA-

ALONGSIDE OTHER Governments the newly formed Malayan Union has set up its own Film Production Unit under the control of the Department of Public Relations. The event is an important one in documentary film history, particularly because of the wide geographical and racial coverage which the unit can achieve.

The Malayan population is admittedly a mere eight million, but it is divided into three main racial groups: Malay, Indian and Chinese, Other races are represented, including European, and the population is therefore widely representative of the whole of South-East Asia. It is not too much to conclude that films appealing to any particular race in Malaya will also appeal to the country of origin, e.g. China, India, Indonesia, and if they appeal to all three main divisions then they will be assured a showing throughout South-East Asia. In fact, although the Malayan Film Production Unit may be known as such, it will really have the status of the South-East Asian Unit, and potentially it is capable of exercising a wide influence.

A short time ago Information Films of India led the field in the area and their production output was very considerable. Unfortunately the Indian Government has not been able to see its way to continue film-making and so IFI has to all intents and purposes closed shop. It is more than probable that the unit will be set up again when the mistake has been fully realised, but for the time being MFPU is left as the only unit capable of serving South-East Asia.

Even with IFI in full production its output did not satisfy the demand and by far the greater bulk of films shown in the area were made through European motive. Although the commentaries were adapted to the various languages, the Asiatic still lost a certain amount in that he had perforce to look at foreigners on the screen. Although the films certainly got a showing and were appreciated, the occasional film made from the Asiatic point of view and dealing with Asiatics got an appreciation one thousand per cent greater, even if it was technically not so good.

Added to this, of course, there are a vast number of subjects that have never been and can never be dealt with by European units, either because the European cannot appreciate the Oriental outlook and make full use of film as a medium or because there are not units enough to cover the subjects waiting.

The Malayan Film Unit should answer both these problems in part. The formation of the unit opens up a new vista of film material and the fact that the staff will be chiefly Asiatic means that films will be made from their point of view. A small number of British film technicians have been taken in to ensure that the Asiatic staff gets the best possible grounding in documentary film production, but it is hoped that in the course of a few years they will take over and run their own unit.

In Malaya, the idea of a documentary film unit is a new one and it is difficult to find trained personnel because very few films of any description have been made here before the war. The output of finished films for the first year will be small, but as the technical skill of the staff improves, teething troubles are overcome and the idea is proved, the volume of production will increase accordingly. A nucleus of equipment has

been purchased from the American Army Film and Photo Section, and may be classed among the finest. In time, the unit will be entirely selfcontained with its own processing plant, recording channels, stage and animation studio.

Most films will be made in Malay, Chinese, Tamil and English, and additional language versions will be recorded for other countries in the area so that showing will not be reserved for Malaya alone. Films will be also made to cater for individual races in Malaya but usually they should have a general appeal. It is important that the idea of the three races living in harmony together should be preserved and fostered.

The unit will be run as a public service and its aim will be to improve the standards of living and education in the area. Literacy in Malaya stands at 40 per cent and it is lower still in adjoining countries. The circulation of printed matter is restricted to a fraction of the population; radio is hampered by the scarcity of receiving sets. It will therefore largely be through film that knowledge and information will reach the people.

Side by side with the formation of the film production unit in Malaya, the development of non-theatrical showing is going ahead even faster. Shortly there should be a number of sixteen and thirty-five millimetre projectors on the road daily, giving shows all over the Union. It is hoped that they will achieve a yearly audience figure to compare favourably with those obtaining in the United Kingdom; and there is reason to suppose that they may even prove more successful, because they are not hampered by the size of a village hall or by rival attractions in the same way that we are in Europe. Showings will

be made chiefly in the *kampongs* (villages) and out of doors where the size of the audience is only limited by the output of the speakers and the size of the screen. If the non-theatrical development in neighbouring countries keeps pace with Malaya's, the field open to the Malayan Film Production Unit will be very considerable.

No mention has yet been made of theatrical showing and here we can expect a very large addition to the yearly audience figure. Although there is no intention to rival commercial interests in film production and films will never be made for direct monetary profit, there will be a definite programme of films made with a view to getting theatrical distribution. Every co-operation from the distributors can be expected. In this way the townsman will see the unit's productions in the public theatres as well as in the schools, the lecture halls and the market place, while the country folk will be served with non-theatrical showings.

Besides making films specially for distribution in South-East Asia, productions will be put in hand for distribution in countries outside the area. It is time that the people of the East were better understood by the rest of the world, and the idea—so tenaciously held by the Western mind—that the Far East is a savage place full of Dorothy Lamours in sarongs, venomous snakes draped over every branch and jungles made of red-spotted fungus and aspidistras, be finally and for ever shattered. The Malayan Film Unit's function will largely be to help the population of South-East Asia to fit more securely into the pattern of modern world economy and to bring about a better understanding between East and West. In Malaya it has been proved over the last century that four races can live in harmony together. Here is a perfect background for a documentary film unit.

# -AND IN EGYPT

As is well known, the marvels of modern civilization make it possible to take a tram from Cairo to the Pyramids of Giza. The same tram will take you to Egypt's Denham, where almost in the shadow of the Great Pyramid stand the stages and laboratories of the MISR studiosthe largest and best-equipped in Egypt. (MISR, by the way, is the banking and financial organization which has an interest in most aspects of the country's trade and general economy, including the very efficient airlines.) At the MISR studios you will find one large stage, one small, a fully equipped sound department with a recording theatre and a dubbing theatre, and all the usual appurtenances of film-making. Owing to the war, it has been difficult to renew and repair much of the essential apparatus, and a lot of ingenuity on the part of the staff has been necessary. But today a certain amount of new apparatus is being installed or due for delivery.

These studios are rented out as well as operating on their own account. At present renting is in the ascendant, and is a reflection of the astonishing boom in Egyptian films which is now at its climax. It is computed that there are over 140 film production companies in Egypt at the moment, and even allowing for the fact that many of these are one-picture concerns, the output per year is colossal. Someone in Cairo said that at the moment some 150 feature-length films are awaiting release.

As far as one can make out, average produc-

tion time for a feature is four to six weeks. The bulk of the costs seem to go to the stars, who receive anything from £5,000 to £12,000 for a month's work, according to their popularity. (There is virtually no income tax.)

In fact, there are all the symptoms of an impending slump.

Background to all this are some salient facts which count. The Egyptian industry is only about fifteen years old. Its rapid growth has taken place largely because no other producing country was (or is) making Arabic dialogue talkies for the audiences of the Near and Middle East. The Arabic speaking peoples are, in general, ardent and certainly indefatigable movie-goers, and the market is much larger than you might expect. A further and more recent factor has been the passing of a law by the Egyptian Government not unlike our own quota law. This encouragement for home-made films has led to the multiplicity of production companies and the over-production already mentioned.

Broadly speaking, there are two main types of Egyptian features. First, the—presumably inevitable—attempts to make social dramas and/or comedies in imitation of the Western type of feuilleton story. Second, action pictures based either on Arabian legend or on contemporary life. In these the Western is largely the model used.

Quality, with certain exceptions, is by no means high. Even a brief acquaintance with

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# RADIO AND THEATRE

Documentary is not the copyright of the film people. The method is in fact appropriate to any medium which reaches many people simultaneously. On these pages, two well-known figures in broadcasting and drama examine documentary ideas as they affect their own work. We begin with Laurence Gilliam:-

THE CAREER of the documentary radio or 'feature' programme in British broadcasting offers many parallels to the course of the documentary film. Both had their roots in the realist movement that followed the first world war and attracted so many active and curious minds to explore the mysteries and excitements of a new medium of expression. Both drew inspiration and strength from the 'social awareness' that permeated the thinking and feeling of so many young artists, thinkers, leaders and talkers of the twenties and thirties who passed out of the middle-class schools and universities, or pushed their way from uncongenial desk jobs or pedagogic backwaters to the more exciting forms of expression offered by the microphone and the cutting bench. Documentary radio, as well as documentary film, recruited its writers and directors from this new, impulsive and purposeful class of young people with ideas. Both forms have

on the whole, I suspect the people of these two worlds know little about each other's work.

The history of the 'feature' programme, which is what radio producers in documentary call their product, falls easily and inevitably into three parts. Part one—'Early Struggles'; part two-'War'; part three—'Back to Peace'. These divisions may suggest a parallel to documentary films, I wouldn't know. The story of the early days was one of struggle for recognition; for incessant hammering at a pleasure-crazed world that the drama of fact was more exciting than the gilded butterflies of the drama of make believe. With rare exceptions, the pleasure-crazed world was not convinced. The exceptions were interesting, because they pointed the way to future successes. There was Job to be Done, a dramatized exposition of American boom and slump which opened many eyes and ears; that was an American production by Pare Lorentz and Bill Robson

I don't think I shall ever forget the flat Lancastrian voice of Geoffrey Bridson over the line from Manchester saying that I 'couldn't have the Merchant Navy Club because there are four land mines round it'. So it went on. Cecil McGivern made an outstanding name for himself among wartime radio writers for his telling of the R.A.F. story, and later the Mulberry story, and later the Radar story. Robert Barr, John Glyn-Jones, and Gordon Boshell brought a new combination of journalistic attack and theatrical flair to the topical war magazine feature 'Marching On'. Month by month, year by year, the documentary feature grew in importance. Writers new to radio like Louis MaeNeice, learnt a new technique in the service of war documentary. Promising newcomers like Jennifer Wayne and Nesta Pain served their apprenticeship in these years. Prewar experimentalists like Stephen Potter and Geoffrey Bridson revealed unsuspected versatility under war conditions. It was a tumultuous, exacting and exciting time, and it has left its mark, for good and ill, on the post-war practice of documentary radio.

There was one wartime programme 'War Report' which outstripped all theories of documentary, and by matching many broadcasting techniques to the speed and pressure of events produced something which blazed with topicality. From D-Day onwards, by means of a combined operation between commentator, feature producers, and news men, British radio gave a daily sound picture of the war, unique in reporting history. Reporters and engineers risked their lives every day to get their microphones to the scene of action. The fighting services cooperated magnificently with transport, communications and fast censorship facilities. The last link was the intricate editing organization which put 'War Report' on the air every night. red-hot from the front line. This job could not have been done without the experience painfully gathered by the experimental pioneers. It set a standard which peacetime broadcasting will find difficult to match.

Radio documentary faces the peace with a record of solid apprenticeship and honourable war service. Its practitioners have passed the stage of experimental measles. They no longer stop the recording car to enshrine the golden untouched speech of every fisherman and shepherd they meet. Indeed, they drive faster, for the danger today is that the radio-wise rustic will now stop them and demand to be put immediately 'In Town Tonight' or 'Country Magazine'! The peacetime set-up of the B.B.C. offers documentary producers a practically unrestricted field for their craft. The Regional stations, after a period of enforced rationing, are bursting into new life. Such programmes as 'The Naturalist' and 'All are Welcome' from the West, 'Town Meeting' and 'Have a Go' from the North, are evidence that the documentary spirit is no London prerogative. The London producers are ex-

# DOCUMENTARY RADIO

by LAURENCE GILLIAM
Feature Programme Director of the
British Broadcasting Corporation

drawn with profit on the talents thrown generously and enthusiastically into their service. Writers, both poets and journalists, composers and pair ters, architects and actors have all found score for experiment and the satisfaction of fulfilment in both these fields

There have, in the past fifteen years, been examples of intermingling of talents between documentary film and radio. But in the main the two groups have followed parallel lines without meeting. This, I think, has been mainly due to the exigencies of the job, and, more recently, to the inhuman pressures of the war, rather than to any eccl tooted differences. I don't know how many documentary film people listen seriously to radio features. Fdo know that radio producers are, as a lody, avid film-goers. I remember, some years ago, with the aid of Basil Wright, trying to arrange a regular get together of film and radio docun crtary people, but it soon fizzled out. More concrete evidence of radio interest in documentary films has been the various instances of outstanding documentaries adapted for broadcasting. There was Western Approaches and Humphrey Jennings' Welsh village reconstruction of Lidice, and several others. Soon a radio version of Jill Craigie's The Way We Live will be presented in the Home Service. Films as a whole are being treated in 'Picture Parade', the film magazine in the Light Programme, and documentary matters get their share of attention. But

for the Columbia Workshop. There was *Twenty Years Ago*, a radio report on the cause of the first world war. There were experiments by Olive Stapley and Francis Dillon and others in the field of actuality, showing the new possibilities of sound and speech recorded in its own setting and its own rhythm. And, as a matter of history, there were the special hook-up programmes for Christmas, the Coronation and the Jubilee, which really did convince the widest audience of the interest and entertainment possibilities of actuality. But, on the whole, features before the war were tentative and experimental, a true workshop for determined believers in the art of radio.

With the war, as with documentary films, the situation changed dramatically. Now fact was indisputably more exciting than fiction. The experimentalists of 1939 became the 'priority one' propagandists of 1940. The recording ear which had browsed happily in the hop-fields of Kent was now smothered with dirty brown paint and sent to browse among the sickening ruins of the Old Kent Road. Earlier, the documentary method was used to dramatize and personalize the enemy in the series Shadow of the Swastika, which immediately captured an audience of millions. The Christmas Day 'hook-ups' continued, but the radio magic that had linked homely families all over the Empire was now used to demonstrate to a dubious world that Britain was still able to celebrate Christmas, even 'under fire'.

ploring new fields too. With the end of the war, B.B.C. feature men have been ranging across Europe with recording cars to bring back authentic sound pictures from France and Sweden, Italy and Yugoslavia, Belgium, Holland and Denmark, for the series 'Window on Europe' in the Home Service. In the Light Programme a new popular audience has been found for documentary, provided the subjects dealt with are of general interest and the presentation popular. A new series, 'Focus', is attempting to put the spotlight on such subjects as 'Drink', 'Gambling', 'Coal', 'Housing'. The aim is purely objective; to present facts, opinions, and trends in such an easily understandable and entertaining way that no literate adult could fail to catch the drift. A similar job was done on the post-war crime wave by the two series 'It's Your Money They're After' and 'There's no Future in It'. Then there is the Third Programme, only two months old as I write, and already the feature programme as practised by Louis MacNeice, Rayner Heppenstall, Douglas Cleverdon, Stephen Potter, and Nesta Pain, has proved equal to the rarefied atmosphere. True, features in the Third Programme tend to be mainly literary in character but a pointer in the opposite direction was provided by the outstanding success of Hiroshima, John Hersey's 'New Yorker' narrative,

which scored a new high in appreciative reaction from the listener research poll, Incidentally, the two greatest post-war successes in documentary radio have both been war stories; Hiroshima and The Man from Belsen, Leonard Cottrell's reconstruction of the experiences in a concentration camp of the Jersey schoolmaster, Harold le Druillenec, it is my own belief that the current reaction against stories of the war both in radio and films has been accepted far too uncritically. I believe that the war has been such an overwhelming experience in the lives of our generation, that its distillation into all forms of art, radio and films included, has not seriously begun. What we have seen and heard so far have been but sketches, hurried dispatches from the threatened outposts of present experience. Therefore, I believe that the apparent confusion and frustration among writers and producers whose war has been taken away is a transient phase. There is no easy way 'back to peace' and there is no quick and easy path 'away from war'. Documentary producers in all fields would clear their own minds if they avoided the catch phrases of the box-office prophets of 1946 as pointedly as they ignored the wishful headlines of 1939. There is only one way ahead for documentary. The slow, steady, mapping of the jungle of ignorance and prejudice.

# DOCUMENTARY THEATRE

by MONTAGU SLATER Playwright, Librettist and Novelist

RECENTLY Michel Saint-Denis was telling me how André Obey wrote Le Viol de Lucrèce. The writer—he is now the chief of the Comèdie Française—had joined Saint-Denis and his company somewhere in provincial France where they were playing in small halls and barns and getting a more direct contact with the audience than a conventional theatre could then attain. Obey visited them at some performance—it must have been in the late 'twenties—and because he felt this way of working with the audience was important he threw in his lot with the Compagnie des Quinze, and wrote for them Noé, Lucrèce and La Bataille du Marne.

Lucrèce (1930) is one of the formative plays of our time. It used cinematic notions. Anyone who saw Aman Maistre in the miming sequence of Tarquin's walk through the corridors at midnight is not likely to forget it in a hurry. But its main innovation was the introduction of narrative and comment in the persons of the chorus, a man and a woman, Le Récitant and La Récitante, who are not only the interpreters between the audience and the play but become in the end the chief characters.

The notion came f think more from the company than from the author. For a long time Obey found himself unable to write these parts. 'I can feel these people but I cannot hear their words,' he said. One day with Saint-Denis he listened to the radio description by two narrators of the Davis Cup final. 'Now I know how to do it,' he said, and wrote the play.

What has this to do with documentary? A full account would take more space than I have, but two aspects stand out: the sense that it was urgent to revivify the relation of audience and artist, and the appearance of new techniques—

radio and sound film—come at the same time and spring from the same soil. Both affect the stage. The result is not only a new conception of realism but the return of poetry to the stage, the radio and the film.

Five years later—it is impossible to keep autobiography out of these things—the Compagnie des Quinze reached England and consciously under the influence of *Lucrèce* I wrote what I called 'a documentary play' *Easter* 1916. This was the time of *Coalface* and *Night Mail*. The word documentary was becoming known but I at any rate was using it in a narrow sense. I meant that although the play was in verse as well as prose and tried to use all the resources of the theatre it was based in the literal sense on the documents, just as *Lucrèce* had been.

Meanwhile in the United States the writers in the Federal Theatre Project had invented the 'Living Newspaper'. Power and One Third of a Nation convinced the most cynical dramatic critics that a new force was coming into the theatre. finglish documentarians were quick to notice that the 'Living Newspaper' technique had much to offer to the screen as well as to the stage. Paul Rotha and Miles Malleson (whose Six Men of Dorset, sent on tour by the IUC in 1936, was a pioneering play seeking a new audience if not a new technique) studied attentively the scripts as well as the performances of the Federal Theatre Tiving Newspapers in London, Unity Theatre put on Busmen (1937) about the London bus strike, a 'Living Newspaper' which was too preoccupied with the particular instance to state a general case, and next year, during the Munich crisis, Unity authors wrote a 'Living Newspaper' overnight on Czechoslovakia.

The firstfruits of Paul Rotha's studies in the technique were seen during the war in World of Plenty: later in Land of Promise, with Miles Malleson's collaboration, he went even nearer the stage form.

Towards the end of the war W. E. Williams, of ABCA, anxious to use every method of interesting the soldiers in current affairs, persuaded Michael MacOwan to produce an ABCA play unit for the presentation of 'fliving Newspapers'. Several plays were put on with success, the outstanding pair being The Great Swap (a too optimistic account of Lend Lease) by Ted Willis and Jack Lindsay, and Where do we go from here? (on full employment and planning) by the same two writers plus Bridget Boland. After the war Jack findsay and Bert Coombes wrote The Face of Coal (produced at the Scala in that year by Theatre '46) about the nationalization of coal and its problems. It is worth noting that the ABCA unit dropped the title 'Living Newspaper', finding it was misleading, and called their productions 'Documentary Plays'

In film, the word documentary extends from films set to poems like Our Country, These are the Men, Green Mountain Black Mountain (all Dylan Thomas), through films that are part poetry like Night Mail (in which Auden was the poet) and Song of Ceylou, through films which are the screen variants of 'Living Newspaper' like World of Plenty and Land of Promise, and through all sorts of other variants to the straight instructional like The Care and Maintenance of the Tractor. The vague phrase I have just used, 'all sorts of other variants' covers in fact the great body of documentary and some of its major achievements. Le propre de ce qui est vraiment genérale est d'etre fécond.

The interaction of stage and screen is a large subject and one to be treated generally. I began with Saint-Denis and Obey and I believe the recall of poetry to stage and screen is one of the grand achievements of what we call documentary. I could make a case for a paradox that would replace the classic phrase, 'the poetry is in the passion' with 'the poetry is in the document': but this is only because the passion and the poetry are both exposed in the freshly discovered detail, the apparently small but significant fact or image which, as any interpreter of dreams will say, is cardinal. This again arises because documentary rediscovers a hving relation with the audience, whether the simple relation like 'You tractor drivers will be interested in this because it tells how to maintain your tractor'; mothers will be interested in this because it telfs how to care for your children's eves', or the more complex relations established by films like Diary for Timothy and The Bridge Here is something manifestly more important than the techbreak out of the picture frame as in Thornton Wilder's Our Town and The Skin of Our Teeth In these too the audience-relation is the important thing. The stage devices, elevent sthey are, end is, I think, to bring back poetry and passion by a deeper, more intimate sense of reality, and not only this intensity but a more extensive sense of reality: a wider world on the stige Hence the use of narrative (Shakespeare emphasized its importance in the chorus pass ges of Hemy 1) hence the use of docume station, of poetry, and the emphasis on music. And in

(continue f on page 80)

# NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Pool of Contentment. Public Relations Films for C.O.I. *Director:* Richard Massingham. *Photography:* Shaw Wildman. *Distribution:* C.F.L. to Government Departments only. 20 mins,

The Treasury, that ominous body which so often arouses fury in the breasts of documentary film makers working on Government contracts, is to be congratulated on presenting a witty film on an apparently dull subject. To let Massingham loose in a typing pool was a temptation that might have been resisted. Fortunately, it was not, and the result is a film that provides much good fun in its description of how and how not to utilize the services of a centralized pool of shorthand writers and typists.

The 'How Not' sequences inevitably make better material than the 'How', but the awful examples of people mumbling, stumbling, muttering, smoking, chewing, peering in desks and paying attention to everything and everybody but the wretched typists who are trying to get it all down, will at least provoke a cheer from the girls and possibly shake the dignities of a few executives who regard themselves as perfect dictators—of letters.

Or will it? Nobody ever sees himself in a film unless the image is favourable, so perhaps not. But the film was worth making if only to heighten the morale of the unsung workers of the pencil and typewriter who would be excused battery and assault, and much worse, if they ever took it into their heads to revolt. Photography, casting and general production values, all contribute to a useful and entertaining film for internal use in Government offices.

The Single Point Fuel Injection Pump. Shell Film Unit in collaboration with B.O.A.C. and Rolls-Royce. (Aircraft Engineering Series.) Director: John Shearman. Photography: Stanley Rodwell. Animation: Francis Rodker, A. J. Shaw. Technical Adviser: Ivor Lusty. Production Consultants: Film Centre. Distribution: Non-T. Shell Publicity Dept. 22 mins.

There have not been many films like this one-Expositional techniques apparently attract very few technicians. When films of this kind are required, all too often producers give them to the junior directors to cut their teeth on, or more experienced personnel bash them out without proper thought. Deplorably few directors are really at home with animation, and patience—even in cameramen—is a rare virtue.

One would like to believe that this particular example of the type might come as a shock to many people—a salutary shock of realization that a subject as involved as this can be put across so succinctly. But one feels, depressing though it may be, that in too many quarters—apart from those for which it is intended—it will be greeted with indifference.

The film is designed to explain the working of the modern fuel injector required for high-performance power units in aircraft. John Shearman has done this by relating the formulae of pure physics to the practical interpretation of them achieved by the engineer. In other words, his film translates a set of letters and symbols visually into swash plates and aneroid capsules, pistons and levers. Every second increases one's anxiety that the thread of the exposition is about

to break, or that one will have to cry 'Pax'!—but, miraculously, it never happens.

Shearman, Rodker and Shaw have used the animation bench to give the film originality of expression and Stanley Rodwell continues in the tradition he initiated for the Admiralty Asdic Care and Maintenance series and contributes the beauty of mechanism in close-up to a film which concentrates your attention for nearly twenty minutes on a piece of equipment not much bigger than a carburretor. There is, by the way, also in the film a working model of the injector which is a masterpiece of crudity. Undeniably it does its job effectively, but it is horribly out of key with the high technical quality of the rest of the production.

The expositional film relies on a precisely controlled visual logic. It is difficult to write (so tempting at the scenario stage to rush delightedly into a welter of technical jargon) and exacting to make, for technical carelessness shows up more clearly than in any other kind. By these standards John Shearman is a welcome addition to the 'back-room boys' of documentary.

The Bridge. Data Films for C.O.I. *Producer*: Donald Alexander. *Director*: Jack Dean Chambers. *Photography*: Wolfgang Suschitsky. *Story*: Arthur Calder Marshall. *Distribution*: C.F.L. Non-T. 39 mins,

Far too few films have been produced about the problems of reconstruction in Europe. Those that have reached the screen have done so after many difficulties; usually they have been made from dupes from scenes shot by outside crews in a hurry and for no obvious reason. These have had to be adapted to a policy laid down by the 'Ministry' and shaped in the cutting rooms.

The Bridge, a four-reeler recently finished by Data, is one of the rare exceptions to this unstimulating process. A unit was sent specially to Yugoslavia to shoot an inspiring little story, of how in a remote village, devastated by war, men and women have worked together to build themselves a necessary bridge, not for motives of individual profit, but for the common good. On this location each sequence was well directed and photographed.

The completed film is not likely to be shown publicly in the cinemas. This is a sorry reflection on our industry when we remember the short films now receiving wide distribution which are bringing disrepute to the word 'documentary'. Yet the very proper complaints on this score have attracted a weight of attention to *The Bridge* which it would not otherwise have achieved, for it is in the reviewer's opinion an extremely disappointing film.

However good an original idea is, and however well each scene is played, a story must be well told. This film is too long, taking thirty-nine minutes when a quarter of an hour would not only have been ample, but far more effective. Instead of being clear and occasionally exhilarating, it is diffuse and occasionally boring. These faults are due mainly to bad construction. There are no climaxes, only a series of anti-climaxes. Time after time we reach the end of a sequence, the film makes its point, fades out to start again, making the same point at the same tempo. Unfortunately, though it is well recorded, *The* 

Bridge is not helped by its sound tracks—effects, musie or commentary. Odd noises appearing at infrequent intervals add nothing to realism but a great deal to irritation, and on one occasion at least to unconscious humour. The music, if listened to with eyes closed, is probably fine, yet, alas, is divorced completely from anything seen on the screen. The commentary sounds as if it reads well, but as spoken is merely repetitive and tiresome. This is not because Valentine Dyall speaks it badly—just that there is no warmth in the written words. As we listen to him repeat again and again: 'The bridge must be built. The bridge will be built', we can only wish it would be so-and quickly, too. Obviously the job must have taken a long time-so long that the unit seem to have been called back before it was finished.

If only the film had achieved a sense of humanity, all its other faults could have been overlooked so easily. There is no black sheep in the village-everyone behaves too perfectly. Admittedly the film throughout follows a group of people and never a single person for long, but the same could be said about The True Glory, or Desert Victory. Surely war documentaries need not have a monopoly of feeling. With this lack of humanity there seems also a certain lack of faith. Probably in an unsuccessful attempt to obtain a commercial release, the political part of the film is played down. It certainly does not try to be impartial—only one case is put forward, but so half-heartedly that the story's strongest pointits simplicity—is almost lost.

It is sad to give such a poor report on this film. The unit rightly must have gone with such hopes to Yugoslavia and had even higher hopes when they saw their rushes. Purely factual and training films undoubtedly perform a service for the community, but it is the occasional film with an idea, such as *The Bridge*, that film makers want to welcome—all the more so, if the idea is disturbing. New films on the world's urgent social, economic and political troubles can be of immeasurable value, but only if they are made imaginatively and made well.

Good Neighbours. *Production*: Greenpark for C.O.I. *Producer*: Ralph Keene. *Director*: Humphrey Swingler. *Photography*: Ray Elton. *Music*: Patrick Harvey. *Distribution*: C.F.L. and theatrical. 15 mins.

The war-time community feeling that grew up around the air-raid shelter and the civil defence post, the gun-site and the aerodrome, is not easy to translate into a peacetime setting. Our planners have talked rather cold-bloodedly about redesigning the pattern of urban life on the basis of the neighbourhood unit. But it has needed someone to show us where the human beings come in and to put some real life into the plans for new communities.

This film, describing how the initiative of one or two people in a small Scottish town resulted in the establishment of a community centre, goes some way to fill this deficiency. Its description of the mechanics of how one organizes a campaign to get the interest of one's neighbours is admirable. We see schoolchildren pushing leaflets under doors, fêtes to bring in the cash, assistance from the Director of Education, and so on. At this practical level it will undoubtedly be of considerable value and it is encouraging to know that there is to be a shorter version as one of the monthly releases to the theatres. One can only regret that the film is not as moving as it might

have been and that too little of the vitality of a strong sense of community finds its way on to the screen. Perhaps this is because the director tried a little too hard to capture the emotional content of the struggle for the Centre and found himself instead with a slight feeling of melodrama. But these are small criticisms beside the essential value of the film and the important role it will be able to play in the work of extending community enterprise.

North-East Corner. Production: Greenpark for C.O.I. Producer: Ralph Keene in association with Film Centre. Director: John Eldridge. Photography: Martin Curtis. Music: Kenneth Pakeman. Distribution: C.F.L. 22 mins.

Sceing a film by Greenpark is rather like sitting in a bath slightly too hot; one gets lulled into a state of happy relaxation in which only the senses count. *North-East Corner* (in the Pattern of Britain series) is very much in this tradition. Its beauty is irresistible, and rests upon a subtle blending of visuals and commentary. Some of the shots are memorable in their exploitation of the photogenic qualities of Scottish landscape and coastline. It is a pity, though, that the sound is not up to the standard of the camera work.

However, the main limitation of the film is that it lacks people. The central character, an old fisherman, exists as a character only through the commentary. Visually he is an unexplored person. Throughout, it is natural or inanimate things which hold the attention, and one's intellect is untouched by the urgent posing of social problems. Of course, North-East Corner does deal with the farming, woollen, and distilling industries of the area, but the approach is so lyrical that it is difficult to come away with anything more than a vague impression about these enterprises. Other aspects of the social organization of northeast Scotland are ignored completely. Oddly enough, this preoccupation with natural things comes out most sharply when the film deals with Aberdeen, the main town in the area. Apart from a lovely shot from the sea, the camera fails to do justice to the stern and individual beauty of the town or to the Aberdonians themselves. One feels that Eldridge quails before the dourness of the place and is anxious to get back to the lovely coast line and pastures.

North-East Corner will be successful because of its beauty and restfulness, and it deserves wide theatrical distribution. But however necessary it may be to maintain the lyrical side of documentary film making which this and other films in the Pattern of Britain series do so admirably, one misses the sense of social importance.

Turn It Out. Production: Greenpark for C.O.4. Producer and Director: Ken Annakin. Photography: Charlie Marlborough. Distribution: C.F.L. 10 mins.

This film sets out to deal with the problem of exports from the point of view of the industrial worker, and is intended primarily for theatrical distribution. It aims to show that an increase in the availability of consumer goods depends upon increased production of export commodities.

Annakin's main intention has obviously been to introduce humour and humanity into a subject which is rapidly becoming hackneyed to the point of boredom. He has used the method of personal reporting, and the audience is treated to shots of Annakin at the factory, at the docks, in the queues, interviewing housewives and shop

The Overlanders. Ealing Studios. Producer: Michael Balcon. Written and directed by Harry Watt. Photography: Osmond Borradaile. Music: John Ireland. Distribution: Eagle-Lion. 89 mins.

When Cedric Belfrage was the film critic on the Sunday Express he could tell after seeing the first, few minutes of a film the rest of the story in detail. There are most likely a few critics who could do the same today, for of the thousands of films that are made few vary but superficially from the standard four-finger exercises. Don't blame the technicians, the writers and directors —blame rather the renters who would about as soon fill in their income-tax returns correctly as risk anything that was new-anything without a precedent. The renters of course ultimately control which films are made and which are not. It is rumoured that the renters of The Overlanders were very glum after they had first seen their charge. Not only did they think the film was poor, but they were quite sure that audiences would agree with them and stay away in numbers. A big-shot renter makes anything up to twenty or thirty thousand a year and is paid this large lump of dough because he knows what kind of films people want to see. You can draw your own conclusions, but The Overlanders will be one of the first ten British money-makers of 1946. It deserves to be, because everything about the film is fresh and new, it is a good story and it is told humorously, excitingly and convincingly. This is the first time you have seen people or heard people like Chips Rafferty and Corky, the girl and her father and mother. They are not the usual old studio clothes-horses playing yet

another part, in yet another costume. The overlanders are individuals with recognizable human qualities. They are not just good or bad. Sometimes they are low in spirit and are willing to give up their project out of sheer despondency. Sometimes they are full of spirit and the obstacles seem easy. Sometimes they hate each other. Sometimes they love each other. Two characters in particular deserve special mention, Jackie and Nipper. Usually coloured people are treated in films as either comic, stupid or wicked. In this one they are in many ways the brains behind the journey. When difficulties are met they are always consulted and it is usually their advice that is taken. Between them and Chips Rafferty there is understanding, and, when other members of the team are uncertain, the coloured men back Chips's confidence with good sense.

With one or two very minor exceptions the film is a winner, but after seeing it you will wonder at the terrific amount of hard grind that must have gone into it by the director and everyone else concerned. Every sequence is covered so completely that, although the editing must have been a pleasure—the shooting, what with cows and horses and heat must have been a major labour. Despite all the handicaps the film is as polished and smooth as any studio production; with special mention for photography.

Perhaps the most important thing though that *The Overlanders* has done is to open up an entirely new type of film-making. Everywhere there are similar stories waiting to be made, but made in the same way that *The Overlanders* was made, not dolled up with artificial story and stars, but made with real people on the spot.

Apology. R. E. Tritton, Director of the Films Division of the Central Office of Information, points out that two films reviewed in the last issue of D. N.L., Old Wives' Tales and Your Children and You, should have been credited to C.O.I. as sponsor as well as distributor. We apologise.

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■ STUDIO ACCOMMODATION



(continued on page 78)

# THE FIRST DAYS OF DOCUMENTARY

By Sir Stephen Tallents, K.C.M.G., C.B., C.B.E.

These extracts from the Cobb Lecture, delivered at the Royal Society of Arts in November, 1946, are reprinted by permission of the Editor of the Society's journal. In them Sir Stephen Tallents tells for the first time the inside story of the beginning of documentary. It is to Tallents that documentary owes the greatest debt, since it was through his efforts that finance, facilities, and, above all, freedom to experiment were achieved. His description of the earlier battles in Whitehall will make interesting reading in parallel with Forsytli Hardy's book, 'Grierson on Documentary'.

NO MOVEMENT, I should be prepared to wager, has ever had a more clearly defined birthplace than that of the British documentary film, and the nursing home in which it first saw the light was Mr Amery's room at the Dominions Office on the morning of April 27th, I928. Six men were present at that accouchement, of whom five are still living-Mr Amery, Mr Walter Elliot, Sir John Craig (now Deputy Master and Comptroller of the Royal Mint and Engraver of His Majesty's Seals), Mr John Grierson and I. None of them it is safe to say, saw just what would come of that meeting. But some of us at least

had amused me, but partly also because I felt it was significant—made a detailed note of it at the time; and, as I have seldom done with the record of an official meeting, I kept the note. I will describe what passed at the birth presently-and this is perhaps the moment to warn you that my talk will deal more with the history of the early documentary film movement than with its latest developments or its future prospects. It is always better to speak of what one knows first hand. But before I tell the story of the birth, let me recall briefly how that bedside meeting came about.

Mr Amery was Chairman of the Empire Marketing Board. Mr Walter Elliot was Chairman of its Film Committee. I was the Board's Secretary. Very early in our work we had been impressed with the opportunity, which cinema presented, for bringing the Empire alive to the imagination of the public. One summer afternoon in 1926—the first summer of our work—I had driven to lunch with Mr Rudyard Kipling in his house at Burwash. Mr Kipling, who had so far fought shy of the films, confirmed our belief in the possibilities of cinema and held out hopes that he would himself guide the making of a film for us. This seemed to me a magnificent opening. I had little difficulty in persuading my Board to pursue it. I had much more difficulty in selling the idea to an extremely sceptical Treasury. In the end, however, I got leave to employ a man

felt that it was important. I-partly because it named by Mr Kipling as particularly suited to work with him; and we embarked on a film of fancy called One Family, which began gloriously with shots of society ladies impersonating the different Dominions in the Throne Room at Buckingham Palace and ended its career less happily after a week's run in the Palace Theatre. In justice to its maker, I should add that he produced, as a by-product of his big film, a particularly charming short film, Southern April, which Miss Lejeune praised on its appearance as an example of 'what lovely things can be done with a camera and a microphone by a man both of sensibility and idea'.

While One Family was still in embryo, a man called at my office one morning with a letter of introduction from Robert Nichols, the poet, which described my caller as having ideas in harmony with those which I had discussed with the writer. My caller gave his name as John Grierson. I found that, after service in minesweepers during the war, he had gone out to the United States as a fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation and had there studied psychology in terms of American cinema. He had never as vet himself made a film. I took to Grierson at once, and felt that here was a man that we needed and must enlist in the service of the EMB. I cannot say with equal truth that I fully grasped at that first interview the theories which he expounded to me. For their full comprehension I would refer you to that interesting book, Grierson on Documentary, which Mr Forsyth Hardy has lately edited and in which he has gathered Grierson's writings and talks from 1926 till almost the present day. But I think I can briefly summarize what Grierson was thinking at that time. He was shocked at the meagre content of community life everywhere. Its enrichment depended, he thought, on a better understanding of the stuff of which it was compounded. That better understanding could not be secured by the orthodox methods of academic education. 'Education,' he was to say of the public a few years ago, 'has given them facts but has not sufficiently given them faith.' It was necessary to touch the imaginations of the people-not merely to impart facts to them; and their imaginations could best be touched by eliciting and presenting to them in a dramatized form the exciting material which he found in the real life around him.

With One Family on the stocks, I could not hope to get the Treasury at that stage to allow us to employ a second film officer. But one of the great virtues of the EMB was that we had a certain discretion to spend money for experimental purposes. I therefore commissioned Grierson to prepare a series of memoranda on the use of the film in other countries. He produced memoranda showing in particular how the non-theatrical distribution of films was going ahead in France and Germany. He also suggested that we should arrange, in the cinema that the EMB had lately installed at the Imperial Institute, a series of private showings of significant films.

Grierson by now was thirsting to try out his ideas in the actual making of a film. We, our minds convinced by his conversation and our eyes opened by what we had seen at the Imperial Institute, were anxious that he should have that

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opportunity. But the Treasury sought to overrule a recommendation of the Board taken at a meeting at which they had not troubled to be represented. Mr Amery rebelled; and the result was the meeting in his room which I mentioned at the outset.

Our plans for this film had not been laid without guile. It was, by common consent, time that the EMB did something for home fisheries. Grierson had served during the 1914 war in minesweepers. Mr Arthur Michael Samuel, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, had studied the history of the English herring fisheries, and had committed his learning to a book, The Herring: Its Effect on the History of Britain. Mr Samuel opened our meeting with a salvo. As a director of Apollinaris, he knew much about advertising; and he could assure us that it was sheer waste of money to think of increasing the sale of Empire products by films. Mr Walter Elliot and Mr Amery, in that order, explained that this was to be a background film, designed to create an atmosphere by presenting English life and character. Then we dangled our herring bait in front of the Financial Secretary. Mr Amery explained firmly that responsibility rested with the EMB and with himself acting after he had received their advice. The meeting ended with Mr Samuel genially offering to help us with his deep knowledge of the history of herrings and ourselves all warmly welcoming his offer. The voice of the official Treasury insisted, as a postscript to our conference, that one 'semi-expert' and one office man should be sufficient for our needs.

It was a very modest enterprise on which we thus embarked. But then, as Grierson once wrote—'If the Civil Service or any other public service must have its illegitimate infants, it is best to see that they are small ones'. But the decision to embark, you will have noted, involved two top-rank Cabinet Ministers; and the making of the film created, I am sure, agonies as sharp as ever attended the making of, say, Eisenstein's Mexican film or Caesar and Cleopatra. A drifter, the 'Maid of Thule', was hired at Stornoway, chiefly on the strength of her crew's supposed photogenic quality. John Skeaping designed a cabin set, which was erected near the harbour. A fisheries protection cruiser obliged with power for the lighting. The under-water scenes were supplied by dogfish chivvying small roach about a tank on the Plymouth Marine Biological Station. Then the 'Maid of Thule' couldn't find the herrings, and operations had to be transferred to another drifter at Lowestoft. Next the chairman of the company, with whom a contract had been made for the film's production, turned up in my room one evening with a long face to declare that it was a predestined flop and had better be abandoned. That was one of the real crises of my official life. But I left Grierson to deal with him. Production was resumed. On November 10th, 1929, the Film Society put on Drifters in a programme with Potemkin, and it won much applause in the theatre and praise thereafter from a number of the critics.

We might at this point have embarked Grierson on a succession of films in the manner of *Drifters*. We were certainly tempted to do so. In fact, on his advice, we refrained. We set ourselves to build up a school of documentary producers and to develop a non-theatrical system of distribution.

(Reprinted from the 'Journal of the Royal Society of Arts', December 20th, 1946.)

# EGYPT (continued from page 71)

Egyptian features makes it obvious that too little time is spent on story, on shooting script and on preparation. This criticism is made, too, by the best Egyptian directors and producers, and it is worth noting that Egypt's finest director, Ustaz Niazi Moustapha, has not only made a close study of film' techniques as developed in Germany and Russia as well as America, but also devotes an immense amount of time to scripting and preparation. But he, and a few others, are exceptions.

It is difficult for an outsider to judge acting quality, since an Arab audience is likely to have different tastes and standards from our own. One factor emerges, however, as a parallel to some aspects of Hollywood, and that is the immense popularity of the singer (whether he or she can act or not). There is a great deal of singing in Egyptian films, and at this time there is, too, an interesting development in style, by which Eastern and Western music is being combined in a not unattractive manner. For the rest, a few visits to Cairo cinemas provide too little evidence about general techniques. The impression received was that actors tend to be either over-melodramatic or too stilted in voice or gesture. But again there are notable exceptions such as Amina Nour el Dine, who, given a first-class story and director, could challenge a large number of Hollywood females very successfully.

Most people in the Egyptian industry are convinced that the present boom must inevitably break, and very soon. The general opinion is that the best production companies will weather the storm, and that in a market free from glut there

will be an all-round improvement in story, style and technique.

Amongst these forward-looking groups are a number of people who would like to see a tic-up with Western production on an exchange or mutual-service basis. With this in mind they look to France, and possibly England, rather than to the United States.

There is virtually no documentary production in Egypt. The reason for this is not unusual. There is no commercial basis; and neither Government nor private enterprise has yet entered the field of sponsorship.

On the other hand, the interest in documentary is very great. It is not without significance that at least three Government Departments—Public Health, Social Welfare and Education—are using visual aids, including films, and are deeply anxious to expand their activities, since in a country like Egypt, with a high percentage of illiteracy, the film can do much in functional and urgent campaigns in, say, the combat against bilharzta, tuberculosis and malaria. So far, however, very little money has been granted from public funds, and work has been limited accordingly.

Given the right financial basis, however, there is no doubt that documentary films could play a big part in the Egyptian Government's present campaign 'against poverty, ignorance and disease'. Taking an overall view of the industry, with its large productive capacity, its young and growing army of technicians, and the endless subject-possibilities of the country, it looks as though Egypt, whatever current problems may have to be faced, is likely to become a filmmaking force of considerable importance.

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# NEW FILMS.

(continued from page 75)

stewards, and in general acting as a sort of 'Alf's Button' genie, wafting the audience from location to location in pursuit of his argument. Purists will say that the direction of this film owes more to 'Hellzapoppin' than to the documentary tradition, and they may be right. In at least one sequence Annakin goes too far and becomes ludicrous rather than amusing. Nevertheless the instructional sequence on the relation between exports and consumer goods is clear and convincing. A further important aspect of the film is that it does not beg the question of increased production but poses the need for equal pay, the necessity for the continuation of joint production procedure, etc.

This should be a useful film to show in the cinemas. Some of us may be disturbed by the sight of Ken Annakin's homely face appearing through a pair of gaudy curtains and, surrounded by tennis racquets, haranguing us on why we should produce more. But, maybe, that just indicates an oversensitivity about the dignity of documentary directors.

This Modern Age series. No. 1. Homes for All. No. 2. Scotland Yard. Producer: Sergei Nolbandov. Associate Producer and Literary Editor: George Ivan Smith. Distribution: G.F.D. 20 mins. each film.

J. Arthur Rank's latest contribution to the screen takes the form of a topical monthly review, the first two issues of which have now been released. The standard they have set warrants a sincere welcome to the series.

Homes For All is a detailed study of the housing problem and of the progress being made towards its solution. While not an exciting film to look at, it compensates for somewhat dreary pictures by the invigorating honesty and conviction of its argument. Scotland Yard, a dramatized essay on how the police are coping with the crime wave, is a much more lively film to watch and retains the honest treatment of Homes for All. Apart from showing the machinery and methods used by the police, it brings home the point that the responsibility for increased crime rests to a large extent on those citizens who patronize the black market.

In presenting a series dealing with topical and controversial subjects the producers have taken upon themselves a social responsibility of great importance. If they maintain their present outspoken policy it will provide a very useful service for the cinema-going public.

The Railwaymen. Crown Film Unit for Ministry of Transport and C.O.I. *Producer:* Alex Shaw. *Director:* R. Q. McNaughton. *Photography:* Teddy Catford. *Music:* Temple Abady. *Distribution:* C.F.L. Non-T. 23 mins.

This is another film in the 'vocational guidance' series, and, as its title implies, it shows the numerous jobs that are available on the railways. The contributions of drivers, firemen, platelayers, stationmasters, porters, signalmen, and many other grades are fitted into the general pattern of railway organization and some attempt is made to indicate wage rates, conditions and chances of promotion. When it deals with the latter considerations the film seems a little unhappy, as well it might, for railway wages are not such as to create a stampede for jobs. Per-

haps because of this difficulty, the film tends to dwell more than necessary on the thrills and romance that trains invariably excite in most people. The small boy collecting engine numbers is finally kicked off the station by a porter who has the same vice (presumably it takes his mind off his wages!).

The Railwaymen possesses the overall technical competence we associate with the Crown Film Unit. There is one particularly good sequence of the workshops and the musical score is first rate. If it fails to attract new workers to the railways, that is not the fault of the film, which does its particular job to the best of its ability.

# MEDICAL FILMS

(continued from page 70)

And what of the amateurs, eclipsed in 1939? The indications are that they are coming back to pick up the threads where they left off, but greatly strengthened by the wide demand for films which this war has brought about. They used to be doubtful of themselves-films in teaching were an experiment-but the war experience has justified their enthusiasm, for what soldier has not been taught complicated techniques by films, and don't they know it? And what is more, their opinion is backed by scientifically designed psychological testing experiments. A technique so useful for soldiers will be equally useful for students. But slapdash technique is dead; impromptu camera-pointing is gone for ever. Hospitals and universities are already officially supporting these small film units, run by enthusiasts who know their photography, their medicine, and their curriculum; units which are going to make films to meet the local

demand, and send copies to other centres if asked. But so far we have only considered production; the film when finished must be made available as widely as possible, for the hospital-unit film will often cost £50-£250 even if the time of the staff involved is left out of account, and it will be impossible as well as wasteful for any one centre to make itself all the films it needs. A centralized catalogue is necessary, giving details of all the films already existing, and kept constantly up to date as new films are made; this work is now being undertaken by the Royal Society of Medicine in conjunction with the Scientific Film Association, and publication is expected to begin early in 1947. A central library is needed to house the finished films, for it will be immediately obvious that it is more convenient to borrow films from a central point than from a number of scattered places. But that, a matter of convenience, is of no great importance; what is far more important is that the film, both before and after projection, should be examined and, when necessary, cleaned or repaired; for if the film is not properly looked after, its life is shortened and it may break during projection, which causes much annoyance to the audience. This 'film-maintenance' is a skilled job requiring specially trained staff and machinery, and the expense of keeping up such a staff is not justified in a small library. So it is in the interest of all small libraries to pool resources to maintain an adequate inspection service for their films. It seems likely if they prove to be in great demand they will be passed over to the Central Film Library

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(In association with the Film Producers' Guild Ltd.) has completed the following films in 1946:—

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'Calling All Drivers' (Parts 1, 2 & 3) (C.O.I.—Instructional)

'Plan for a Foundry' (Ford—Informational)

'Gold Coast Journey' (Cadbury—Background educational)

'Tools for the Job' (Ford—Dealer instructional)

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The Horizon Film Unit is at present producing films on a variety of subjects including flying, agriculture and industry.

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## PENICILLIN

The story of its discovery and development, and the use of penicillin on war casualties.

Other films in production will be announced when completed.

Applications for the loan of these films should be made to the

Central Film Library, Imperial Institute, London, S.W.7

for distribution; for the CFL has special facilities for distributing large numbers of copies of any one film (it is well to remember that they hold the largest collection of general medical films in Great Britain, for the MoI, MoH, British Council and ICI films are there).

So much for distribution. Now we come to planning. First, a survey of the film, available must be made; this is being done at the SM as has already been mentioned. Next, they must be reviewed and their teaching value assessed; this task is already being undertaken by the SFA. After that, an attempt must be made to discover what subjects teachers most desire to be covered by films; this has been done by the Medical Committee of the Scientific Film Association, whose report has been published. Lastly, a system must be brought into being to ensure that, wherever possible, no two units are making a film of the same subject without being aware of each other's activities; this problem also is being tackled by the Medical Committee of the SFA who invite units contemplating making films to notify them well in advance; when two units are found to be overlapping on the same subject they are, if they agree to it, notified of each other's activities and so enabled to co-ordinate their production scheme to the benefit of both.

That, very briefly, is the history of the medical teaching film in Great Britain. I have shown that it is only in the last few years that film has received more than our passing attention and accordingly the number of good films at present available for teaching is small. I have shown that, nevertheless, the demand is increasing from within the profession rather than from outside

pressure, and that, indeed, outside production sources are so sporadic and uncertain that our profession is spontaneously setting up small production units of its own. It now remains to see how this experience compares with that in other branches of teaching and learning.

It can be said immediately that our experience is not unique. Film as a method of teaching is in demand in all walks of life. It seems certain that the use of the film for teaching soldiers, fireguards, dockers and aeroplane builders in the war years has shown both teacher and pupil that here is a powerful technique. But it is equally certain that, whether the war experience has intensified this experience or not, it has certainly not caused it; the demand from the public before the war years was steadily rising; any factual film could be certain of enthusiastic reception from a rapidly increasing audience, and this demand is real and spontaneous to the extent that in spite of reaction from possibly a majority of teachers, the use of film in schools is now talked of as an accomplished fact, awaiting only the manufacture of sufficient projectors. There is, therefore, a wide field opening before us. In medicine the only subject on which there is already a usable selection of films is anaesthesia, so we start with a virtually clean slate. We should make sure that in our enthusiasm we do not respond with a flood of worthless films, many duplicating each other. The demand is great, the resources small; we must use them to best advantage, We. should avoid dictation; we should avoid the superplanners stifling our enthusiasm and initiative; we should above all ensure that unpopular or unproven techniques can still be published in

film form, we must in fact, maintain the 'freedom of the cinema'. But we should also be intelligent in our desire to maintain freedom; we must co-operate. We should pool resources, technical and financial, and we should make our results, the films, available to all who need them, regardless of whether they are a rich school or a poor one. We need a block government grant, administered by the teachers, to which is added the financial resources of smaller groups and from which any group may draw funds to finance a film programme which a majority agree is needed. It seems reasonable to do this on a regional basis; for a given university to draw up a film programme covering a broad subject area—say, elementary midwifery or medical (as opposed to surgical) disorders of infancy; another university would draw up a complementary programme, e.g. advanced midwifery or surgical disorders of infancy; the two universities would criticize each other's programmes, eliminate overlap, add sections that the other requires, and then these integrated programmes would be submitted for the approval of the financing body. They would be integrated on a broader basis, into obstetrics and gynaecology or paediatrics, and then the money allocated and production undertaken regionally by the University Film Unit for simple films or by a professional unit for the more complex films. Such a scheme would prevent much overlap, duplication and worthless production; but it need not hold up production; for it is immediately obvious that films on some subjects are imperative, and for these the finance body could alloate a grant immediately.

# Halas & Batchelor

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# THEATRE

(continued from page 73)

mentioning music I am reminded that *Lucrèce*, the play from which this article started, gave the basic text for his most recent opera to Benjamin Britten, the composer in *Coalface* and *Night Mail*.

The attempt to bring a wider world on the stage is the clue, I think, to the influence of documentary in the theatre. Just as the important effect of documentary on the feature film is seen best in films like Millions Like Us, The Overlanders and The Way Ahead, which bring new matter to the argument, new breadth to the camera's vision, new stories to the screen, so I suspect we shall see documentary's influence in the theatre in more subtle ways than the extension of the 'Living Newspaper' technique. My own guess for what it is worth is that the future is not with the 'Living Newspaper'; its weakness is implied in its name, it takes too general a purview to be long-lived. Films and plays are long-term media: the short-term and the topical are best left to the radio, except in circumstances that may, of course, recur, like those in which the ABCA play-unit flourished. This unit has indeed been recently touring Reunion Theatre's generalized 'Living Newspaper,' Exercise Bowler in Germany; and an ambitious company of players and dancers from the North, Theatre Workshop, has had some success with a dancemime and documentary play Uranium 235. Thus there is evidence against my guess, but I stick to it. I believe the influence of documentary in the theatre and elsewhere is to turn the attention of writers to new stories and sharper ways of telling them, 'with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature'.

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Managing Director, British Industrial Films Ltd 183 King's Road, Chelsea, SW3 FLAxman 0941



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# Greenpark Films

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Directed by HUMPHREY SWINGLER

Assistant Director: ERICA MASTERS

Script: JACK COMMON Editor: HENRY KIRBY

Photography: RAY ELTON Music: PATRICK HARVEY

Theatrical version: AFTER SIX O'CLOCK (1 reel)

# **★North-East Corner** (2 reels)

A description of the countryside and industries of the north-east corner of Scotland

Directed by JOHN ELDRIDGE Photographed by MARTIN CURTIS

Assistant Director: AL MARCUS

Script: JOHN ALLAN LAURIE LEE

Editor: HENRY KIRBY

Music: KENNETH PAKEMAN

# **★Turn it out** (1 reel)

An illustration of the interdependence of full employment and full production

Directed by KEN ANNAKIN

Assistant Director: EMMA SMITH

Editor: CARMEN BALAIEFF

Photography:

CHARLIE MARLBOROUGH

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# DOCUMENTARY

EWS LETTER

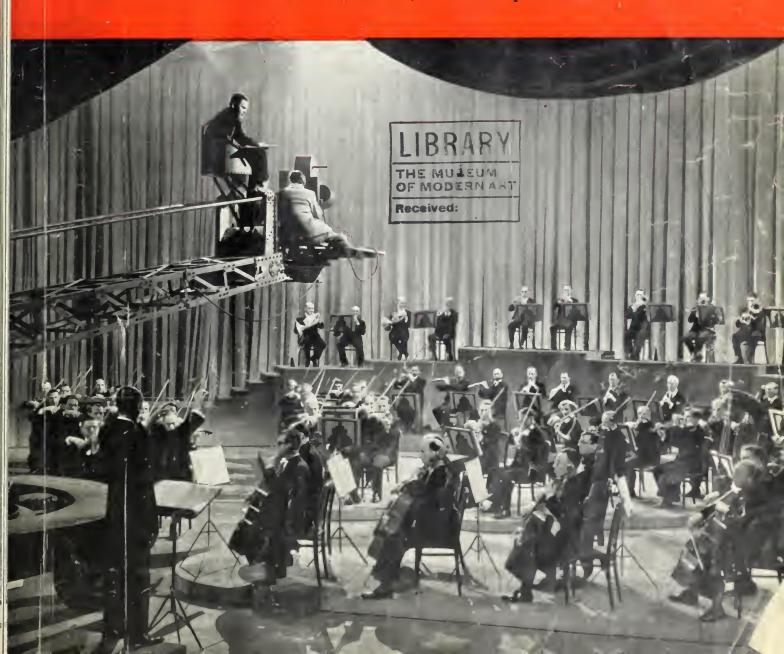
APRIL-MAY 1947

ONE SHILLING

THIS ISSUE: New Light On An Old Film by a Psychiatrist;

Canadian Initiative by Isobel Jordan; Critics in Conflict; Non
Cheatrical Distribution by a Technician; Notes of the Month;

Film and Book Reviews; Correspondence



# FILM STRIP IN MEDICINE

The possible development of the use of film strip in medicine has occupied the minds of responsible authorities for some considerable time. Research has shown that the assimilation of factual knowledge requires the use of numerous text books and references by teachers and students which makes study a lengthy and laborious affair.

Standard lantern slides have been used considerably but are fragile, heavy to carry about and relatively costly to produce.

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The final frames of the strip show how pictures are linked together to illustrate a subject—in this case the diagnostic procedures in relation to epigastric pain.

'Film Strip in Medicine' was used as a demonstration strip at a recent joint meeting of members of the Royal Society of Medicine and the Scientific Film Association. The Unicorn Head 'Flotation' strip was also shown to demonstrate the advantages of film strip for teaching.

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# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

Editorial Board: Edgar Anstey, Geoffrey Bell, Sinclair Road, John Taylor, Basil Wright

APRIL-MAY 1947 VOL 6 NO 56 PUBLISHED BY FILM CENTRE 34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W

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# INFORMATION—PLEASE

During World War II this country pursued a policy of public information and enlightenment which was based on a simple but fundamental thesis. This thesis was that people must have something worthwhile to fight for, not merely something to fight against. The annus mirabilis of the war saw not only Alamein and Stalingrad, but also the Beveridge Report.

The Labour Government today is facing the consequences of failing to take proper account of the importance of public information. The fuel crisis of February found the citizenry at large unprepared, uninformed and therefore bewildered if not resentful. Practically no one knew why there was no coal, or why, all of a sudden, the productive capacity of this country was being curtailed. This, mind you, after an intensive if superficial campaign to plug the 'Export or Die' story.

#### The Peace Effort

The plain fact is that speeches by Cabinet Ministers—in or out of the House of Commons—are nowhere near the answer to the specific problem. Just as in 1940-45, so today, people must have something to fight for, some future target of good living and the good life against which to weigh hardships and disillusionments which they are bound to suffer in the post-war world, whatever the complexion of the Government in power.

### Knowledge is Strength

What is needed mainly is clear and sensible explanation. No peptalks or exhortations can be really successful unless people understand present problems and the method by which they can be solved. As it is, the opposition rejoices in a field-day of negative bombardments and the replies of Ministers and Government spokesmen appear to be no more than a reciprocal barrage of doctrinaire tomatoes.

Yet our present Government has a cast-iron majority, and was presumably elected because people in this country believed that it alone could put into practice the very ideals on which the war was fought and won. What people are not getting is a sense of understanding and a sense of leadership. They could get some measure of this if the machinery of public information was giving an output similar to that which, for all its faults, it achieved during the war.

Films, radio, Press, lectures, exhibitions—geared to an overall plan, not of political propaganda, but of explanation, enlightenment and, above all, of informed discussion, could clear the lines within a few months. That the present Government realizes this in theory is obvious from the fact that the Central Office of Information exists (the Tories might well have dispensed with it), and from the fact that Francis Williams has his own set-up at 10 Downing Street. But the means of public enlightenment are not being used with skill or with vision. The people of this country are not being given the feeling of being in on a great experiment designed to bring a better life to them and to ordinary folk everywhere.

## Information plus Enthusiasm

It is time that Mr. Attlee and his eolleagues realized that the modern State eannot function without an informed and enthusiastic public any more than it can exist without the necessities of physical life. The two things are part and parcel of each other; and, despite other preoccupations, the Cabinet should, before it is too late, turn its attention to this essential need to inspire—the need to give that leadership which rests not just on a foolproof majority but on the active consent, goodwill, intelligence and effort of a united nation. Otherwise how can we, let alone the other United Nations, get anywhere?

LET US HAVE A PRODUCTION DRIVE IN PUBLIC INFORMATION—RIGHT AWAY.

# NOTES OF THE MONTH

The cover picture on this issue is a production still from 'Instruments of the Orchestra' made by Crown Film Unit for the Ministry of Education. (Reviewed on page 88)

#### Carl Mayer

WE draw the attention of all our readers to the Carl Mayer Fund which is mentioned on the inside front cover of this issue. Mayer was, and still is, one of the great figures of world cinema. To us in this country, more particularly, it was not only his contribution to such films as *Caligari*, *New Year's Eve*, *The Last Laugh* and *Sunrise* which we remember with gratitude. Nearly all documentary workers owe him much, for he lived his last years in this country, and spent himself generously, indeed over-generously, in practical work and general advice on the making and shaping of the factual film. The proceeds of the Fund will be devoted to settling Mayer's estate and to erecting a suitable stone to him over his grave in Highgate Cemetery. An industry which pays scant tribute to its real pioneers has here an opportunity to express a lasting tribute to one, the most distinguished of them.

#### The British Film Institute

ELSEWHERE in this issue is an article which calls attention to defects in the reviewing and appraisal methods of the monthly Film Bulletin issued by the British Film Institute. This article is by no means the first we have published in criticism of the Institute's methods and policy during the past ten years. But we have every hope that it will be the last. We do not propose here to recapitulate what has appeared wrong, but rather to welcome (with any appropriate hatchetburying which may be necessary) the recent announcements regarding the Institute's future. It would appear that under the new and able chairmanship of Patrick Gordon Walker the Institute is now to be given the scope and opportunity to become that alert, active and constructive body which we all hoped for on its inception and which all will agree is sorely needed today. It is understood that more adequate (though not yet perhaps sufficient) finance is being made available—the new grant is nearly double the old—and that an inquiry is to be held to determine the range of the Institute's activities in the future. Some of its present activities may be found to be redundant; for instance, much of its educational work which was begun at a time when the then Board of Education sniffed at films, may now well be transferred to the Ministry. Other of its work may now be expanded and enlarged. It is to be hoped that the reconstitution of the Institute will make it the focal point for all special activities in the world of film, that it will have a good-sized projection theatre, and that it will be housed in a building large enough and suitable enough for a policy of measured and confident expansion.

#### Ooh-mind my corns!

A CHAP we know was complaining the other day about how documentary was being oversold. He said every periodical and book he pieked up was plugging it and the radio prattled of nothing else. Okay, but another chap we know went down to a west country debating society and found nearly a hundred people believing that

a documentary was something which solicitors used to furnish their offices. It appears that a loud noise in Soho Square is heard only faintly at Land's End.

#### A Sad Loss

THE death of Leon Schauder in a Dakota crash at Croydon is a matter of distress to all concerned in the progress of documentary. Schauder first became known here before World War II when Gaumont British circulated his notable film *Nonquassi*. From then on his work in developing his personal techniques (he was a cameraman as well as a director), in presenting African problems in human terms was of great value, not least during the war period. It is a tragedy that he should have been killed just at the moment when he was embarking on new and ambitious projects which, had he lived, would we are sure, have established new channels of understanding between Africa and the rest of the world.

#### Comings and Goings

ALEX SHAW has resigned from the Crown Film Unit, and his place has been taken by John Taylor. All who know him will feel him to be a worthy successor to Shaw, who did a most admirable job at the Unit. Taylor is one of the veterans of documentary. He joined the EMB Unit at the age of sixteen, and worked on most of the major productions of documentary during the 'thirties, including a year with Flaherty on Man of Arran. For the past nine years he has been in sole charge of Realist Film Unit, and the high reputation of this Unit is largely due to his efforts and guidance. Taylor's place at Realist has been taken by Brian Smith, who has been responsible for a number of its most successful directorial jobs during the past few years.

### The Films Act-Round Two

HAVING submitted their proposals for the new Films Act in January, the various trade bodies have now been called in by the Board of Trade for individual discussions. The producers, backed by the unions, favour legislation that will assist the rising standard and quality of British production and eliminate the cheap and nasty. On this very issue the old battle with the renting and exhibiting side of the industry is, however, rejoined.

To give the cinema public a better balanced and more entertaining programme of films means today improving what is commonly called the 'supporting programme'. This in turn means giving the producers of documentary, cartoon and other specialized films greater access to screen space and better renting conditions. The key question this raises is whether the exhibitor and the renter are wise, let alone justified, if they put the short-term considerations of the increased expense this will involve them in, before the long-term prospects of a live and developing British industry and better cinema' entertainment. The way in which discussions at the Board of Trade appear to have developed so far is not encouraging on this point.

Readers will notice that this issue of 'Documentary News Letter' has been called April-May instead of March-April. The cause was the intervention of the Fuel Crisis. The power cut disrupted the activities of the printer and 'D.N.L.' had to take its place in the going-to-press queue. Next issue will be June-July and, fuel crisis willing, will appear early in June.

# **SPONSORSHIP**

# -or Films Don't Grow on Trees

THE vast majority of British documentary films are made at the expense of Government Departments or industrial undertakings. In short they are sponsored. Long-established sponsors like the Shell Oil Group, the Gas Industry and M.O.I. (now C.O.I.) have recently been joined by local government bodies and certain trade unions, but such desirable developments do not affect the basic fact that documentary production is unable to stand on its own financial feet and to recover from distribution revenue sufficient money to meet production cost.

It is easy to exaggerate the disadvantages of sponsorship. Most documentary films made today are not suitable for production on a non-sponsored or 'voluntary' basis. They form a legitimate part of the public relations or educational policy of some industrial, governmental, or 'social-purposed' organization. Their *primary* object is not entertainment, and the audience whose needs they are designed to serve, is not so constituted as to alford a financial return.

Let us, however, consider the position of any short documentary production which is intended primarily to entertain cinema audiences in terms which are not the concern of any available sponsor. Prior to 1939 the cost of such a film is likely to have been in the region of £1,500 per ten-minute reel; today the equivalent figure, due to increase in labour and material costs, is more likely to be £3,000. And the producer has still to face the basic problem of securing theatrical distribution. If he is fortunate enough to do so he may hope for a return, after deduction of distribution costs, of something in the region of £250 a reel—one-tenth of his production cost.

Too much emphasis cannot be placed on this disparity. It lies at the root of all current documentary policy. The short film (and often the second feature) is regarded by cinema exhibitor and distributor alike as mere fill-up material to be obtained at nominal cost. The original cause of the trouble was the virtual giving away of American supporting material, dance-band shorts and so on, by American distributors. This material had perhaps already earned its production cost in America, and could in this country be thrown in as a makeweight to help salesmen dispose of an expensive feature. The result has been that British shorts and second features produced to compete in this market have had to be made for a few hundred pounds a reel, and, as a consequence, have almost invariably been so lacking in quality that a fully civilized community would scarcely have permitted their exhibition. Yet only a product so cheap and inadequate could hope to recover its production costs.

It should perhaps be mentioned in passing that many of the makers of these films, content to cling to their precarious livelihood on a virtually unprofessional level of operation, have not hesitated to attack the competitive distribution of high quality sponsored films, on the grounds that the cinema is being used for commercial advertising! We need not probe further into this odd concern for the common weal which sees the public good served by some monstrous collection of badly photographed scenic views, strung together at the maximum possible length and condemns *Target for Tonight*, *Song of Ceylon* and *World of Plenty* as 'advertising'. It is obvious to anyone not blinded by his own commercial interests that public needs must come first and that if, in present economic circumstances, these are better served by the sponsorship method, then the source of the production, finance, becomes a secondary consideration.

Yet the fact remains that great difficulty attends the theatrical distribution of high-class documentary films whether sponsored or otherwise. It is this which accounts for the high hopes attaching to the recommendations now under consideration for the revision of the Quota Act which in its present form shortly expires. Previous versions of the Act have done little for the documentary and short

film producer, but the hope is that the Board of Trade will see fit to introduce clauses which will ensure not only that American short and second feature footage is balanced by a high ratio of British made films in the same categories, but that eligibility to rank as quota shall be contingent on a reasonably high level of production expenditure. In brief the Act must contain a minimum cost clause for such films. Documentary and specialized film-makers through their appropriate organizations and with the support of many other powerful sections of the industry are pressing for legislation to this end, and it is very much to be hoped that what is generally admitted to have been Britain's outstanding contribution to world cinema will shortly be available on British screens. For the cynic might well argue that the documentary film has two main characteristics—high quality coupled with rare visibility!

But whatever the nature of new legislation, we must not lose sight of the fact that if the production of documentary films were to be put on an economic basis in the normal commercial sense, the need and justification for sponsorship would by no means have passed. This is not simply because films to be used for purposes other than entertainment are likely always to require subsidy (notably in the field of education) but that even films intended for theatrical distribution may appropriately express the point of view of some group in the community, and that sponsorship finance may properly be made available for the purpose. The film is perhaps the outstanding instrument of group expression and provided entertainment standards are reached, the screen may well be used for public relations by local governments, trade unions, public utilities, or the Government itself. This practice is in line with modern democratic practice which requires that every community group which renders a public service should play its appropriate part in public enlightenment.

Indeed, there is much to be said for the view that ideas of social value are more likely to originate from community groups operating outside the cinema than as the result of the individual inspirations of a film-maker—especially in view of the fact that the individual film producer or film director is almost always answerable to a financial group which may have no roots in the public service. For all films are 'sponsored' in the sense that they must somehow acquire finance in advance of production, finance which will not come back from the box-office for months or even years. And the source of such finance may well exert a direct or indirect influence on the nature of the product. The idea of overcoming this difficulty by setting up a State-controlled finance corporation or film bank for the provision of initial production capital and any other similar steps in the general direction of the nationalization of the industry do not completely dispose of this criticism unless important safeguards are provided. For a film bank can hardly be quite free from an awareness of what is in the interests of the existing structure of the State. And if we are not to fall into the current errors of totalitarianism we must be careful to watch that in escaping from the present financial stranglehold we do not fall into another which may be equally oblivious of the claims for self-expression of minority groups.

The answer is, of course, that the only safe sponsor of documentary films is the public itself acting through its commercial and professional groups. Fair marketing conditions will, in effect, enable the cinema-goer to act as an indirect sponsor but there will still remain many films which derive from the need for self-expression of the public in roles other than that of cinema-going. The doctors will want to have their say; the postmen through their trade union perhaps, the women's guilds, the local government officers, all may wish to reach their fellow-citizens through the screen. Their power to do so should be limited only by their ability to hold the interest of an audience.

# ODD MAN OUT

# -CRITICS IN CONFLICT

Members of the 'D.N.L.' Board normally contribute anonymously, but when 'ODD MAN OUT' proves to be BASIL WRIGHT'S meat and EDGAR ANSTEY'S poison the Editorial 'We' is split

## 'A MASTERPIECE'—

## WRIGHT

Before going on record as saying that a film is a work of art, and a fine one, a cautious look-around is essential. In an industry where raspberries are reckoned in superlatives the critical eyes and ears are in danger of being clouded and bemused. Anything which rises above the level of mediocrity gives one a kick, and often one is liable to overpraise.

Odd Man Out, however, has that something extra the others haven't got. Exercise your critical judgment as vigorously as you like, this film does what no other British feature film has ever achieved. It rings the aesthetic bell with as loud a clang as do acknowledged masterworks like Greed and Kameradschaft—to take two widely-spaced examples.

Sense of shape, sense of drama—yes, including the unities. Command of technique so skilled and precise that it seems hardly possible. Impeccable direction of impeccable actors. Absolute certainty of purpose. These qualities director Carol Reed, whom we hereby salute with three times three, possesses in full measure.

But it is in the richness of conception of the story he has chosen to tell that Reed is streets ahead of all but a few contemporary directors. He certainly ranks with John Ford at his best.

Like Ford, Reed has not depended on an original screen story. Indeed he challenges direct comparison with Ford. *Odd Man Out*, like *The Informer*, is based on an Irish novel. But, again like Ford, Reed seems to have been helped, rather than hindered by developing his work from the novel-form. The transmutation is completely successful. The novel, as it were, no longer exists, but has been changed to something new—something perhaps better. Incidentally, F. L. Green, the author of the book, worked on the script with R. C. Sherriff

script with R. C. Sherriff.
Anyhow, *Odd Man Out* is that rarest of things -a film about human feelings and thoughts and motives, all of which are real and recognizable, and touched with true pity and terror. It would have been so easy to make nothing more than a cracking good thriller out of this story of a hunted, wounded fugitive from justice who evades capture for eight hours in the city of Belfast. But Odd Man Out is in no sense a thriller. On the contrary, Reed has devoted himself, with an integrity and intensity unique to the real artist, to probing deeply into the human heart. In a film surging with characters (literally hundreds, some only glimpsed for a second, but remembered longer), he depicts the diverse reactions of all sorts and conditions of people to the hunted Johnny.

Johnny has—not deliberately—shot an innocent man during a robbery. Johnny is badly wounded. Organized society is mobilized to hunt him down. But Johnny is also a leader of a

political party—of the underground, as it were. The robbery was planned to obtain funds, not for gain. So all the people who come up against the fugitive, and all those who are seeking him, whether as enemies or friends, have secret thoughts, secret motivations—and their secrets are made plain by their words and actions, or in their faces.

To all this Reed adds a lovely fresco of children—pathetic in the true sense of the word. Slum children, *bourgeois* children (the little boys at the snowy window for instance), all of them weaving in and out of the sombre story rather like the child characters of Dostoievski. The little girl with one roller skate is in my opinion one of the loveliest images in movie since the dancing peasant in Dovshenko's *Earth*.

Again, this is one of those rare films which makes a genuinely creative use of sound. Technically it is one of the finest tracks I have ever heard. Imaginatively, it uses all the sounds of a big city, sometimes for emphasis, sometimes in counterpoint. There is a sequence where Johnny's girl, seeking to throw off a plain-clothes man, goes through a dance hall full of jitterbugging people. The band reiterates, fortissimo, a brief, inane, ugly phrase. She emerges. The plain-clothes man

is still with her. She walks down a street to the priest's house. The plain-clothes man is still with her. And with us too is the repetitive, grinding echo of the dance band which never ceases till the priest's door closes behind her. Then there is the barking dog and the alarum bells as Johnny, deserted by his pals, starts off on the run. And throughout a delicacy of dialogue in undertones and whispers—better, or at any rate, as well done as in *The Grapes of Wrath*. Linking all is William Alwyn's music—a fine score which is clearly designed to be an integral part of the whole sound pattern.

But above all it is people one remembers. Not types, people. We can understand them because they are real and ordinary—or, if, as with the raving drunken artist, they are extraordinary, we find in them the fantasia of our own sub-conscious.

With *Odd Man Out* British cinema has at last come of age. In Carol Reed we have, in my opinion, one of the finest artists the screen has produced in any country.

The film must have cost the earth. Unlike some other British productions, it is worth twice what it cost, whatever the price. For you cannot set a price to a work of art.

# 'A JEREMIAD'—ANSTEY

Now I hope I am not one to use the critical sledge-hammer to crack a nut, nor are my visits to the cinema devoted exclusively to the pursuit of social significance; but I cannot escape the conclusion that *Odd Man Out* is a shocking film. Not so much in content or in manner as in the fact that it has been made at all. And then again less shocking in its making than in the eulogies with which it has been received. For more than one critic has acclaimed it as Britain's greatest film of all time; and this means greater than *Love on the Dole, Song of Ceylon, In which We Serve*, and *Brief Encounter*.

Cast your mind back to Germany after the last war. In those days the morbid screen drama of the helpless individual struggling against malignant circumstances was high art. The incessant rain, the dark vice-ridden cities (*The Street, The Joyless Street*) provided a setting for the tortures of sensitive souls hopelessly damned by manmade civilization. The action moved from sordid bedroom to disreputable café to brothel. And through it all loomed the agonized face of suffering Man.

It took us a few years to realize that we were seeing in these technically admirable pictures a symptom of post-war defeatism. They represented the individual in escape from the hard facts of European life. Man had destroyed his own world and here was an attempt to scrape aesthetic satisfaction from the destruction. It was the hey-day

of schadenfreude, of happiness wrung from bitterness. A few years later still we saw that this comparatively harmless use of the film carried grave dangers. One had always been aware of the adolescent satisfactions to be got from luxuriating in the sense of defeat of those woe-begone productions (at twenty I still enjoyed every moment of them). But later it became clear that the mood which they represented, and indeed fostered, provided an ideal spring-board for coming totalitarian theories. The individual was defeated: what could be more enjoyable than for him to lose his individuality in some great, dark, authoritarian force?

Is it unfair to consider Odd Man Out against this historical background and to find a parallel? It can scarcely be denied that at a time when the country is exhausted by war the film wallows in the hopeless plight of almost all its characters. Although the purpose of the revolutionary raid with which the film opens is to seize urgently needed money for the 'Organization' and, although a large sum of money is in fact stolen, the film carefully ignores the positive achievement, makes no reference to what is done with the money and concentrates its attention instead on the fact that the hero has lost faith in what he set out to do. The plot is careful to permit him no satisfaction, psychological or physical, of even the most minor order. The fact that his girl dies with him does not abate his tortured grimaces,

nor does the girl find any noticeable fulfilment. The 'Organization' is left in despair, most of the characters expose their smallness of spirit (it is not without significance that only the priest comes across as a character complete in himself) and the rain gives place to snow. Nor can the film claim the diplomatic immunity of High Tragedy. The incompleteness of the supporting characters destroys hope of that. No true tragic issue is allowed to mature. At the best it is Hamlet with no one but the Prince.

I am here less concerned with detail than with the over-all conception of the film, but the fact must be faced that the rather alarming sympathy which most critics have felt with the mood of this picture, has blinded them to an exasperating unevenness. There is some extraordinarily poor acting (notably from the policemen) and levels of characterization and accents of speech are so variegated that we have no consistent atmosphere of Belfast or any other real place. The sequence with the mad painter and the disreputable doctor (a half-character this, if ever there was one) belongs in another film-or perhaps constitutes another short film in itself. For suddenly at this point all attempt at realism goes by the board and we have a stylized setting which might almost have come from The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari. And why has there been no reference (in any review I have read) to patches of dialogue couched in the embarrassing terms of cheap sentimental melodrama? Mr. Mason does all that is asked of him and my expectations were keenly aroused by his early appearances as the rebel leader. There were signs here of humour and depth of feeling. But once he is wounded

he has to become a vague, inhuman religious symbol and the brief flicker of healthy vitality which he had given to the film dies out. Indeed I maintain that there is only one thing in this devitalized film deserving the adjective 'great' and that is Alwyn's musical score.

To sum up, The idea that Odd Man Out can be regarded as a sort of Hymn to Charity is so much mumbo-jumbo concealing the real truth that it is an 'escape' film in the profoundest sense. In itself that is not important. But let us watch carefully to see that in periods of cold, discouraging weather we do not too readily accept the view that the defeat of all humanity's aspirations is not only inevitable but aesthetically admirable. If we are to have here in post-war Britain our own particular brand of Jean-Paul Sartre's Existentialism, let us at any rate recognize it for what it is.

#### WHAT HAPPENS AT THE MOVIES?

we readily assume that the film occupies a large part of daily life. Evidence obtrudes on all sides: miles of queues, acres of posters, the fan magazines on the bookstalls with their tittle-tattle of the stars, and the daily conversations of millions. But until comparatively recently little of this evidence has been collected and examined with real sociological intent.

Because cinema-going is heaviest in the English speaking countries, it is appropriate that the sociological study of the film should have originated in the U.S.A., and been developed more recently in this country. Faber & Faber are to be congratulated on their new series of film studies on this subject which started with Margaret Thorp's America at the Movies. This book, first published in the U.S.A. in 1939, is one of the best of its kind. Brimming over with facts which must have cost a great deal of effort to collect, it is well written and extremely entertaining. It sets out to follow the sociological ramifications of the film in America, primarily at the level of its influence on dress, behaviour and personal habits and opinions. It presents an astonishing variety of information which is ready to hand about the incredible doings of film-fans on the one hand and the Hollywood film companies on the other, about film morality, the Hays Code and the lobbyings of sectional interests of the American public eager to thrust their idea of what is right and proper on the rest of the world. Since Hollywood films still occupy two-thirds of the world's screen-time, much of this is of immediate relevance to us all. Most revealing is the picture given of the star-cult. There are straight commercial aspects such as the fact that the sale of skates in America went up 150 per cent when Sonja Henje, the skater, became box-office, or the advertising of this star's hair-style, or that star's way of dressing and of such things as 'Judy Garland dresses that will give any young Miss the "swing and smartness" of this famous M.G.M. star'. Then there's the evidence of how millions of Americans dress, eat, decorate their rooms à la Bette Davis or Clark Gable. How millions more solemnly lap up the emotional wash prepared by the fan magazines. 'Gary Cooper is so darned humble and honest about himself he still to this day doesn't believe he has a thing any other guy hasn't', and similar touches of common or uncommon humanity. The best thing about the book is this evidence which it provides of how films and in particular the stars in them have given a badly needed focus to the hopes, desires and ideals of at least one continent of emotionally starved humanity. At the same time one should remember that there is another side to this influence. If a film can raise the standards of dress and make-up and send people to the public libraries to read the books on which various films are based, the achievement is a positive one.

J. P. Mayer's Sociology of Film goes a step beyond the superficial effects of the film on the outward forms of behaviour and attempts to find out a little more about the mass-psychological influences at work. He is not content to collect existing evidence. His book is made up for the most part of specially prepared documents detailing the individual reactions of a selected number of children, adolescents and adults to films. The work originated in the first place from an inquiry which Mr. Mayer undertook in 1944-5 on behalf of the Rank Organization into Children's Cinema Clubs. The result is however, disappointing. Despite the author's excuses in the introduction, the book is unnecessarily heavy and undigested. The opening chapters expound the theory of the film as a popular art with copious side references to the Elizabethan and Greek theatre. But is it really necessary to parade such an array of learning to convince us? When the author at one point quotes Tacitus and insists that 'we could fill many pages, if not a whole book with similar quotations from Cicero, Livius, Plutarch, Polybius, and many other Roman classics' one's instinct is to duck and rush wildly for cover. Quotation of this kind is also adduced in support of the contention that the cinema is the modern version of the 'bread and circuses' phase in a society's development. Then follow a collection of essays by a class of schoolgirls, replies to a questionnaire put out by the Picturegoer and various other reactions obtained from workingclass children. A certain amount of this material is of undoubted psychological interest. It also makes one wonder how literate people really are in this country. But as a method of trying to represent a mass phenomenon it is of questionable value. The documents are not sufficiently representative of the various classes, occupations, age-groups, etc., for any findings to be at all valid as a sample survey. On the other hand they are not prepared in a sufficiently imaginative or interesting way to pass as individual social documents in the sense that Pilot Papers, for example, or even certain documentary films, try to present a mass problem in the light of one individual example. It is difficult therefore to see how Mr.

Mayer can justifiably go on to draw conclusions from his evidence and propound various remedies such as State censorship, State distribution of films, etc. These may well be the correct solutions, but we do not need to read through 200 or more pages of unrepresentative reactions, to agree with him.

Despite these limitations in the methods he has chosen to use, Mr. Mayer is nevertheless doing useful work if he can succeed with this book and with the second volume which is promised, in drawing attention to the need for developing the sociological study of the film. At the same time there is another line of approach which has not been tried to any great extent. Elsewhere in this issue there is a study of the French film, La Grande Illusion, by a Dutch psychiatrist. He approaches the problem of the film's mass psychological effect via an analysis of the film itself. He attempts to show how a film which ostensibly sets out to create new social attitudes, in this case anti-war feelings, in fact falls a victim to the old attitudes against which it tries to evoke resistance. In certain respects, La Grande Illusion, is an exceptional case. Few films can equal it artistically and few set out so obviously with positive social intentions. Nevertheless, it is true that the majority, if not all, films do have quite concrete social relations of this kind. In themselves and in the people, situations, or things that they depict, they are at all times either confirming or rejecting current social values and attitudes whether they set out to do so consciously or not. And it is of considerable importance to realize that we are being 'got at' in a social and political sense, in moments when we are most relaxed and unsuspecting.

Through the analysis of actual films, through the investigation of individual reactions and through the collection of the more easily accessible facts which Margaret Thorp has drawn attention to, it should slowly be possible to build up a rather more coherent picture of what all this cinema-going is about. And do not let us underestimate the importance of work of this kind. It is not only essential to our understanding of the business of making and showing films; it is also intimately bound up with many of the problems of present-day society.

America at the Movies by Margaret Thorp. (Faber and Faber, 12s. 6d.)

Sociology of Film by J. P. Mayer. (Faber and Faber, 15s.)

# CANADIAN INITIATIVE

# ISOBEL JORDAN writes of an important first step towards the international co-ordination of the class-room film

THE production of educational films to meet the children during this period, being chiefly conschool curriculum has always suffered from the severe economic handicap of unco-ordinated curricula in different areas of the English-speaking world. To obtain a common denominator, certain agencies in the United States, Canada and Great Britain have recently begun to conduct negotiations. Mr. W. R. Speight, a member of the Audio-Visual Aids Committee of the British Ministry of Education, paid a two months' visit to the National Film Board of Canada and brought back a selection of Canadian films to be adapted for use in British schools. Among the films chosen were Canadian Landscape, a film showing the Canadian artist A. Y. Jackson at work; Salmon Run, a film describing the migration of salmon in the Fraser River; Life on the Western Marshes, the story of how bird life is protected on the prairies; and Great Lakes, a film about shipping on Canada's inland water-way.

#### British Films Used

In reciprocation, the Canadian Film Board has undertaken to distribute certain British films in Canadian schools. Two such films at present being shown to schools by the Board's mobile units are Man: One Family and Your Children's Eves.

Meanwhile, one of the leading U.S. 16 mm. distributors is conducting negotiations for the adaptation to the U.S. curriculum of a series of school films produced by the educational unit of the National Film Board. The films will be made with the documentary rather than the textbook objective in mind; they will not attempt to give a visual exposition of a particular lesson in science, geography, mathematics or other topic of a set curriculum, but will strive to acquaint the child with aspects of life related to his own experience in his community, his country and his world.

The first group of films, the Junior Community Series, for example, has been designed for primary grades. It will show the child what part is played in his life by such familiar figures in the community as the postman and the policeman, and will describe how such everyday services as water and electricity are brought to the child's home.

#### Local Variations

There are several reasons why the National Film Board of Canada decided to produce school films of this broader kind. The first is the fact that the Board is an agency of the Federal Government, while education in Canada, as in the United States, is largely under the jurisdiction of the regional authorities. It has therefore been found uneconomic to produce films dealing with specific topics of a particular curriculum so long as local and regional variations in the curriculum make such co-ordination impractical.

#### Documentaries for Children

The actual pattern of these films has been based upon the Board's wartime experience in conducting film showings in schools. While the Board did not make films specifically for school-

cerned with producing material for adult showings to rural and urban audiences, it did show its programmes in rural schools. These programmes included documentaries like Salmon Run, Great Lakes and Life on the Western Marshes. It was found that if these documentaries were presented after the teacher had been supplied with background material, lesson guides and class-room questions, they were not only readily adaptable for direct teaching purposes, but capable of stimulating the children to engage in discussions and to embark on projects related to the themes of the films.

#### Visual Units

Now that the Canadian Film Board has undertaken the production of school films, it is adapting this lesson to the production of a complete visual teaching unit made up of a film, filmstrip, wall sheet and teacher's manual. In one of these units, dealing with the function of the postman in the community, for instance, the film describes the work of the postman and the post office through a meeting between a little boy, Bobby, and the postman who brings a letter to his home. The filmstrip gives an account of stamp collecting and touches upon the geography of countries from which stamps come. A silent segment is included showing Bobby writing a letter. His mother shows him how to address and mail it properly. The wall sheet depicts the people who speed the mail to its destination, the sorters and dispatchers in the post office, the rural mail carrier, the engineers on the trains and the pilots who fly the planes. A second wall sheet describes the correct way to address and stamp envelopes and parcels. The teacher's manual provides a lesson guide and discussion questions.

#### Advisory Committee

In order to ensure that the films produced will be of proper pedagogical standards, the Board has enlisted the support of the Canadian Educational Association, a body reflecting the interests of education in each of the provinces. The C.E.A. has set up a Film Advisory Committee composed of teachers, Directors of Visual Education in the provinces and members of the National Film Board. The Canadian Teachers' Federation and Provincial Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Education have also been consulted.

The educational production unit in charge of the series has drawn up its editorial policy which reads in part as follows:

'The curriculum is not our doctrine. We accept its facts but remain free to interpret it with the freedom allowed to all teachers. In approaching each subject we will remember human needs, human ambitions and human achievements in that order. We will place our camera on the inside of every subject and look outward with its people. Our thinking will be in terms of people; the family unit in relation to the larger com-

#### Guidance for Film-makers

The Film Advisory Committee laid down a few guiding rules for technical treatment which may be summarized thus:

- (1) Technical treatment should be simple since a child is bewildered by fade-outs and similar photographic devices.
- (2) There must be continuity in the story as a child tends to remember things in the order in which he sees them. Flash-backs are to be avoided as confusing.
- (3) Scenes must not be too short nor follow one another too quickly—the tempo must be slow.
- (4) Major characters in films should be children as a child is interested in other boys and girls of his own age.
- (5) Commentary should be used sparingly at points where it is essential; the visuals should tell
- (6) The musical score and sound effects should be kept to a functional minimum.
- (7) Each film should contain a recapitulation at the end.

#### Appraisal by Teachers

The second task of the Film Advisory Committee has been the preparation of film evaluation sheets for use with each film which will be screened by an evaluating panel of teachers. These sheets will ask for a grading of each film indicating its suitability for primary, elementary, intermediate or senior high school; they will request an opinion of the sound and photography, and seek comments as to the film's teaching value. The sheets will also contain a synopsis of the film, its curricular classification, the name of producer and distributor, and the date of production, a description stating whether it is black and white or colour, sound or silent, and a statement of the length and price.

In conjunction with this project, the educational unit of the Board has undertaken to correlate its own films as well as British, American and other foreign films in its possession with the curricula of each of the nine provinces. The British film Your Children's Eyes, for instance, is being classified thus: suitable for Grades VIII and X in Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island, and for Grade IX in Ontario.

#### Master Catalogue

In addition to this classification scheme, the Educational Division of the Distribution Department of the Board is preparing a master catalogue of all the school films, from Government, private and international sources that are available in each of the nine Provincial Department of Education libraries. Provincial Directors of Audio-Visual Education have been asked to forward copies of their catalogues with the films suitable for teaching that have been in frequent demand appropriately marked and graded. These film titles will be catalogued alphabetically with producer, length, grading and price indicated together with a listing of the provincial libraries where they may be obtained. When completed, this catalogue will have classified all the backlog of school films in Canada, and will be the first project co-ordinating the work of all Canadian provinces in any field in the sphere of education.

If work of this sort can be adapted to a still larger area, the plan of an international school film exchange may well become a feasible pro-

### NEW LIGHT ON AN OLD FILM

### A Psychiatrist analyses La Grande Illusion

[This abridged study by C. van Emde Boas, a3 112] when she points to the portraits: 'Liége, leading Dutch psychiatrist, was first published in 'Freie Katheder', a Dutch literary periodical last year. It is one of several sociological studies which he has made of selected films.] when she points to the portraits: 'Liége, leading Dutch psychiatrist, was first published in 'Freie Katheder', a Dutch literary periodical last film demonstrates how important the relationship is between human beings: the German larmer's wife and the French pilot fall in love and the

La Grande Illusion is accepted as one of the most perfect productions of pre-war French filmmaking. It is also a film with a purpose, preaching the fraternization of peoples with such fervour that it is frequently considered unsuitable for public performance. What I am concerned with here is not its artistic quality, but whether it is really an anti-war picture and whether its effect on the average cinema-goer is such as the propaganda pretends it to be. Although my own initial reaction on seeing it was one of deep emotion, I cannot help on reflection considering it politically a complete failure. Despite its artistic qualities and its superficially humanistic intentions, it has, I feel, a strong reactionary undercurrent.

To assist readers who did not see or do not remember the picture a short summary of its contents will be necessary.

#### The Story

In the war of 1914-1918 a French plane flown by Lieutenant Marechal and Capt. de Boieldieu is shot down by the famous German fighterpilot, Cavalry Captain von Rauffenstein. The German, the prototype of the well-educated aristocrat of the old school who knows how to behave towards his defeated adversary, welcomes the prisoners most courteously and offers them, according to the rules of the game, an excellent lunch in the officers' mess. The Count de Boieldieu, in particular, who is his social equal, is treated with all the consideration he could ask for. The French are then brought to a prison camp and soon they begin to dig an escape tunnel from the dormitory to the open field. We see life in the prison camp, the Prussian officers and the jovial militiamen, all portrayed in the sympathetic light of an ennobling humanism, of the relationship of 'man to man'. The old guards are mild and human, full of understanding for the prisoners. Then comes the disappointing transfer of the prisoners on the day the tunnel was to have been used. By chance the principal figures meet again in an old castle in the mountains, specially arranged as a camp for prisoners who have tried to escape. Von Rauffenstein is the commander, a job he loathes, as he admits to Boieldieu, but which enables him after all to serve his country. Again an escape is planned, this time it goes off successfully, due to the self-sacrifice of Boieldieu. He succeeds in distracting the attention of the castle garrison by playing the flute on the highest tower of the castle, but has to pay for it with a bullet in his stomach from the revolver of the commander who shoots him 'with a bleeding heart', 'doing his duty', when Boieldieu refuses to come down. Marechal escapes with Lieutenant Rosenthal, the son of a rich Jewish banker, and both try to reach Switzerland. They find shelter in a farm near the frontier where a young peasant woman has been left alone with a little girl. All the men are gone, killed. There is a wonderful Tannenberg, our greatest victories.' Again the film demonstrates how important the relationship is between human beings: the German farmer's wife and the French pilot fall in love and the German child is cared for by the enemies of its country. But when Rosenthal's foot which has been injured is healed, the escape proceeds. Marechal promises to come back after the war to fetch Elsa and then they vanish into the night to reach Switzerland safely.

#### Conscious Motive

From this short summary it should be clear even to those who have not seen the picture, that what we might call the conscious, or the higher motive of the film is a pre-eminently ethical and humanistic one which moves us deeply and cannot be overlooked by a single spectator. The act of fraternization remains the leading theme throughout the whole film. When von Rauffenstein asks the captured staff officer whether he is related to the military attaché in Berlin and they start talking about Mlle Fifi at Maxim's and about Oxford, the individuals are at once set free from the group (i.e. German or French in this case) which kills every tender feeling. They have achieved a common human basis on which a new relationship is possible. And that same motive comes in repeatedly: whether it is the sympathy shown by the German guard for the French lieutenant who goes crazy in solitary confinement, or the attachment of the French farmer's son to the farm and the way he speaks to a German cow as if it were a human being. The fact that love overcomes all national antagonisms, that the charm of a little girl and the magic of the Holy Crib bridge all differences of language, all this enables us to accept a picture, so 'human' in the best sense of the word, as a whole. 'On n'apprend que de celui qu'on aime!'

#### The Dangers

But this is just the thing which makes this film so terribly dangerous. Right next to these antiwar passages, but much less visible and more dispersed throughout the whole story, we find elements which may easily reconcile us to the idea of war unless we can succeed in dissociating them from their deceptive cover of honour, chivalry, patriotism and duty. The pathos of the scene of the defeated French pilot being lunched in the German officers' mess and the chivalrous idea of the wreath dropped by the German squadron leader in honour of his dead French adversary, are perhaps the least dangerous. Any cinemagoer can see through this false show as long as he remembers Rotterdam, Warsaw and London. After the murderous air battles above Berlin and the atomic bomb on Nagasaki aerial warfare has ceased to be a tournament for modern knights à la von Rauffenstein. But Renoir himself could not possibly think of that in 1938 and therefore it should be considered his special merit that he even then attached this element of empty war romance exclusively to an effete aristocracy. Much less transparent is the effect of the outburst of patriotism introduced quite naturally when the Fort Douamont near Verdun changes hands several times. It is only on careful reflection that one realizes that the glamorous and stirring tune of the Marseillaise, gripping not only the French on the screen but even the spectator in the cinema, is one of the refined means by which more 'kriegsbereitschaft' is let loose on the spectator than all the other anti-war tendencies in the rest of the picture, can keep in check. Even less apparent and less intense, but more permanent and uninhibited by any contradictory feeling, the pro-war tendency works via our inevitable sympathy with the prisoners and their repeated and linally successful attempts to escape.

#### 'La Patrie'

The effect of a film as well as of a drama is based upon our identification with the persons on the screen or on the stage. The anti-war tendency, preached openly and quite honestly by Renoir, is, however, entirely undermined by this identification. For, why do these men try to escape? Why do they repeat their efforts in spite of solitary confinement, transfers, and all sorts of drawbacks and dangers, with an obstinacy and a courage descrying a better cause? Because they are fed up with the war and military rigmarole? Because they are longing for the peace and comfort of Switzerland, the neutral modern Canaan? Not at all! All these grown-up men are moved only by a single idea, a single ideal which is not called 'home' or 'wife' or 'work' and 'child' but 'La patrie'. Rosenthal, the 'sale juif' expresses it when he says towards the end of the film that he is going back to his guns and Marechal to his flying. For here lies the greatest weakness of the film-or, from the point of view of the ruling ideology its greatest strength: war is portrayed throughout this whole anti-war picture in a very special way. We feel its threats, we undergo its force as an evil working from a great distance, a tragically inevitable fate coming over mankind. Everybody mourns for it, everybody suffers but no one is guilty. Outside death rages mercilessly, but nobody is responsible for it.

All the facts we heard after 1918 about profiteering, imperialistic cliques, trusts, international cartel arrangements and so on, are entirely forgotten in the intoxication of nationalistic feelings.

#### Beneath the Surface

In short, under the cover of fraternization and a humanistic ethic the fatal inclination to look upon war as something inevitable visited by higher powers upon a guiltless world, is activated by this film. In this way it unwittingly strengthens the passive attitude of men and women towards this human evil and stifles the inclination to resist which it pretends to call up. If this picture is shown today in a special performance as frequently happens, it should be introduced and explained and not only praised for its artistic values. We should always ask, not only what is the artistic quality of the art presented to us but also what is its effect upon us and in which direction does it pull us. We should learn to look below the surface and to understand why a Renoir could not help himself; unless we want to become the victims of the very things we are pretending to fight against.

### NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Instruments of the Orchestra. Crown for Ministry of Education. *Producer:* Alexander Shaw. *Director:* Muir Mathieson. *Photography:* F. Gamage. *Music:* Benjamin Britten: played by the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Dr. Malcolm Sargent. *Distribution:* M.G.M. (Theatrical) and C.F.I. (Non-theatrical). 21 mins.

There has been much controversy about this film which belongs to the Ministry of Education's experimental series of visual units. *Instruments of the Orchestra* sets out to explain to children the various instruments, the contribution each makes to the ensemble, and the way in which the various sounds created are integrated into one harmonious whole by the composer and conductor. Crown Film Unit has enlisted for this purpose the aid of Benjamin Britten, Malcolm Sargent and the London Symphony Orchestra, on the very proper assumption that only the best is good enough for children.

Some people have quibbled about the expensiveness of this production and have claimed that as much, or more, could have been taught for half the cost. It is true that this production has a certain luxurious pace about it and that is far removed from many of the over-earnest and unimaginative classroom efforts we have seen. It is equally true that other means might have been used. For example, we might have had a solemn film in which each instrument was much more painstakingly explained and illustrated, after which one might feel certain that no reasonably intelligent child could possibly confuse a piccolo with an oboe. Nobody would claim such results for *Instruments of the Orchestra*.

Does that mean that this film is a failure—or that perhaps it had a larger purpose? It must be assumed that the other media in the visual unit will stress the individual characteristics of the instruments and perhaps show something of the technique of scoring. The sound film, which is the highspot of the visual unit, should integrate this knowledge and consolidate it in the mind of the child by the combined impact of aural and visual illustration. (Care must be taken, however, to ensure that a high quality of sound reproduction is achieved in the 16 mm. version.)

The film does in fact do its job of integration superbly, and in so doing brings to the forefront the implied motive behind the visual unit—the development of the aesthetic senses of the children. They can now see what all this study is really about—the creation of beauty and expression of ideas. Here Benjamin Britten achieves a triumph. His fifteen variations and fugue have everything required; charm, melody and, above all, simplicity. And Malcolm Sargent deserves special mention, too, for his introduction of the instruments in terms of unpatronizing homeliness. though it would have been happier if he could have been introduced and his function briefly explained as conductor. Instruments of the Orchestra has received commercial distribution and this raises certain questions regarding the Ministry of Education films. In this case it would seem a sensible decision, for the film has much to offer adult audiences and should be popular. However, it

would be an undesirable development if classroom films were made with an eye to theatrical distribution, however tempting this might be from a financial point of view.

Return to Work. Merlin Films for C.O.I. in conjunction with the Ministry of Labour. *Producer:* Michael Hankinson. *Director:* Gilbert Gunn. *Photography:* Cyril Bristow. *Story:* Robert Waithman. *Composer:* Norman Fulton. *Musical Direction:* Dr. Hubert Clifford. Distribution: C.F.L. and theatrical. 18 mins.

The purpose of this film is to show how the Ministry of Labour trains disabled men so that they can resume their place in industry. After periods of training at special rehabilitation centres even the most apparently hopeless cases gain sufficient confidence and skill to earn their living in jobs most suited to them.

The subject is an absorbing one but, unfortunately, the presentation leaves much to be desired. The film has at times a most objectionably patronizing tone, particularly when an instructor lectures the disabled men on the necessity for them to cultivate the qualities of conscientiousness and honesty. Casting, too, is careless and, at the cinema where the reviewer saw the film, the audience was convulsed with laughter at the antics and mannerisms of one of the Ministry interviewing officers.

Apart from the photography the film is technically poor. The inordinate use of fades give it the appearance of a succession of isolated episodes; the spectator is constantly reaching for his hat under the mistaken impression that he's had it.

In view of the resistance within the trade to the showing of documentaries in the cinemas, it is to be hoped that both C.O.I. and the producing companies will devote more time, care and skill to their films than is evidenced in this one.

A City Speaks. Films of Fact for the Manchester Corporation. *Producer:* Paul Rotha. *Associate Director:* Francis Gysin. *Photography:* Harold Young and Cyril Arapoff. *Music:* William Alwyn played by the Halle Orchestra conducted by John Barbirolli. *Maps and Charts:* Isotype Institute. *Distribution:* Not yet announced. 65 mins.

There is a beautiful reel in this film in which Rotha and his team take Wagner and the Valkyries for a ride in a big way. The music is provided by Barbirolli and the Halle Orchestra. The visuals, cut perfectly to the music, are of Manchester at play-football, dance halls, fun-fair switchbacks, speedway-racing, wrestling and the rest. This sequence has a big punch, and it comes at the right moment—the moment indeed when you are beginning to wonder if you aren't going to be slowly smothered (perhaps not unpleasantly) in Isotypes and civic consciousness. The skill of Rotha and his associate Francis Gysin is indeed notable throughout the film in that the didactic or the tendentious is never allowed to overbalance the human interest for too long.

Faced with the not entirely enviable task of cramming all Manchester into a little over an hour, they have devised a system of cross-sectioning the different aspects—organizational, historical, sociological, personal—in blocks, rather than attempting an impressionistic synthesis. While this method inevitably leads to lengthiness as far as the film's total structure is concerned, it does make for a clear presentation of the basic argument. This argument is that any citizen—as it might be you or me—considering the community in which he lives, must look at it from not one, but a series of points of view; only by doing so can he get a clear understanding of the overall situation and problems at any given moment.

The film is so devised as to be a 70-minuter for Manchester and other interested cities of the Midlands, and, by eliminating the centre reels, a 45-minuter for general circulation. This ingenious approach gets rid of what otherwise might have been a major criticism, that the trend of the film is too parochial. The reels dealing intimately with Manchester's more particular problems can be taken out without destroying the main purpose of the opus, which is to delineate the principles of local government (in big city terms) as a whole.

Photographically it is superb, with credits to Hal Young and Cyril Arapoff. William Alwyn contributes what is quite certainly his best score since *The True Glory*. The editing—quite clearly by Rotha himself—is brilliant, although certain sequences, particularly early in the film, could lose a fair amount of footage.

Apart from the later reels, this film lacks some of the emotional impact of *World of Plenty* and *Land of Promise*. Whether its expositional values make up for this is something which only public reaction can decide. In the meantime one may salute a sincerely made film of major dimensions which breaks no new ground but certainly builds surely on a proven basis.

Cotton Comeback. Data for C.O.I. *Producer:* Jack Holmes. *Director:* Donald Alexander. *Photography:* Suschitsky. *Distribution:* Non-T. C.F.L. 25 mins.

Few directors would envy Donald Alexander the task of presenting a constructive and optimistic picture of Britain's cotton industry. Now that mining is on its way to becoming an efficient and productive enterprise, cotton probably merits the dubious distinction of being our-most chaotic, out-moded and unproductive industry. In the words of the recent Working Party Report: 'The time has come when all concerned must make up their minds that they must move towards a major transformation . . . unless they are willing to see the industry drift into a period of prolonged trouble and eventually shrink down to the size of a minor British industry.' This is the challenge that Cotton Comeback puts on the screen.

The film centres around a Lancashire working class family of which the father has left the cotton industry after years of unemployment to work in engineering. His two daughters have gone to work in a modern and well-equipped mill and are anxious to persuade him to join them. The young man of one of the daughters shortly to be demobbed, brings the problem of his future career into the family discussion. A Town Meeting on the future of cotton provides the focal point for the thrashing out of these problems.

It is difficult not to compare this film with *The Way We Live*. In both cases one sees a family group grappling with an important social issue. But there the similarity ends. These are real cotton

folk, shrewd and sometimes obstinate, but warmhearted always. They have a sturdy realism that makes the Plymouth family seem like ghosts. In a film where the naturalness of all the characters is outstanding there is still room for a special mention of the refreshing charm of the mill worker and her boy-friend. (Unlike the sophisticated miss of The Way We Live she will assuredly not end up with a feature contract!)

It is difficult to deal with the policy questions touched upon in Cotton Comeback, largely because the Working Party Report (to which considerable though cautious reference is made) has not yet been adopted, let alone implemented. In these circumstances one cannot blame the director for having depended a good deal on exhortation. Stress had to be laid on the responsibility of employers and workers alike to join in the solution of the industry's problems, and this means on the one hand the modernization and rationalization of production and on the other the taking up of employment in the mills.

The film struggles manfully with these issues, but it has pitifully little to go on. True, it is pointed out, and even shown, that some enlightened employers are going to great trouble to attract labour, but the key question of wages is neither in fact nor, therefore, in the film, faced up to. (At one point it even appeared that the employers would do anything for the workers except pay them a living wage!) But these are small criticisms of an otherwise interesting, concise and human film, of the type which the average cinemagoer will welcome.

#### No. 5. Thoroughbreds for the World

Thoroughbreds for the World provides twenty minutes of snob-appeal (Lord Derby, his home, his horses, his trainer, his stud groom), love-ofanimals appeal (racehorses from the Godolphin Barb to Airborne, and from foalhood to maturity), appeal to business instincts and patriotism (bloodstock an important British export), appeal to sporting instincts (The Derby and a rapid tour of the world's classic horse-races), no sex-appeal, two or three moments of great beauty (riderless horses in movement), Britain's most meaningless music track to date, and (almost certainly) one vawn from the commentator between sentences.

It is we'll photographed, not very well directed, and no more than competently cut. My guess is that somebody broke his heart padding it out to two reels, but it is all very picturesque and

tranquil to the point of boredom.

### 'THIS MODERN AGE' SERIES

Distribution: G.F.D. 20 mins. each film.

#### No. 3. Tomorrow by Air

Tomorrow by Air is an adequate survey of British Civil Aviation from the pioneers of flight to the jet-research Lancastrian. It contains a wealth of good material-the historical stuff of early aeroplanes is fascinating all by itself-and gives a decent account of current developments. We get a look at all the major civil aircraft types now in service or under construction; we glimpse research and development work in progress; the Anglo-American jet race comes in and so do a lot of other interesting things. Apart from a few bits of mis-timing, a pointless musical score, and a commentator who recites his stuff as if he didn't know what it meant, didn't care what it meant, and would rather be in bed anyway, this ought to be a good film, but unfortunately it fails. It fails because it is not exciting. Its fundamental fault is that it poses no problem; there are no internal tensions; it does nothing to the audience save assure it that all is, and always has been, well with British Civil Aviation.

Now, aviation is full of problems, both technical and social; air pioneering was a difficult, illsupported, haphazard business; public ownership of airlines is a fine debating point; the fact that flying is still attended by certain risks is present in all our minds today; the problem of technical achievement outstripping social advance gives us all to think—in short the whole subject bristles with fascinating intellectual exercises. But no, instead of something which would arouse discussion, get a reaction from its audience and make people go through the motions of thought, 'This Modern Age' gives us a soothing cup of warm cocoa-the very best cocoa, made with real milk, but not the stuff to jerk the cinema addict up in his seat; not the stuff to set the customers arguing in the aisles, and not the stuff to bring them back next week asking for more.

This is a pity. The 'This Modern Age' series set a high standard with their housing film, and the Unit now have a big chance to lay about them with vigour, vitality and gusto. Let them tilt at a windmill or two, they have excellent lances and a free right hand; let them attack with violence or present some reasoned arguments, let them have a hearty crack at doing something and aiming somewhere. Enough of this over-

optimistic 'Pippa passes' business, with skill and craftsmanship in an industrial heaven, and all's right with the world. We know we're good, now let's hear how we might be better.

Actuality is not enough—it's got to be creative handling of actuality, and creation is a shocking, vitalizing, disturbing affair, quite different from warm cocoa.

And there ought to be a legal way of banning the line 'Then came-war! (boom-boom)' from commentaries for the next ten years.

#### No. 4. Fabrics of the Future

Fabrics of the Future succeeds because it does what Tomorrow by Air and Thoroughbreds for the World (especially Thoroughbreds for the World) fail to do-it poses a problem. In fact it poses a whole row of problems, and so it makes you listen and watch.

Through the Middle Ages, it argues, Britain's prosperity was built on wool, and in our own time the Dominions are big exporters of wool to Britain. A widespread and important economic set-up exists to deal with the world's wool. Now, along come synthetics—textiles made from wood pulp, dead fish, glass or what have you. Where do we go from here? Can the wool trade fight back; ought it to fight back; do we want it to fight back? Can it cope with its internal problems—labour shortage, bad factory conditions and so on? What is, it doing to improve its product? The film doesn't supply all the answers, nor should it —it awakens interest in what is evidently a very real problem, and it does so in an honest, workmanlike fashion.

Considering issues 3, 4 and 5 of the 'This Modern Age' series together and in the light of the earlier issues (Homes for All and Scotland Yard) it is apparent that the Unit still has a good deal to learn about sound-track-what to put on and how to time it with the shots; how to achieve some sort of synthesis so that tracks and visual fuse up into a film; and a lot to learn about how the facts which they photograph so well can be made intellectually or emotionally exciting. The public cinema screen in this country is wide open to the 'This Modern Age' series, and the age is full of problems and perplexities for the public cinema audience-put these two facts together and watch them flare up into something fine.

#### No. 6. Palestine

The subject of Palestine and its political problems is for many of us these days an incentive to reach for the bromide, prepared to swear that any piece of film speaking on the subject is going to have its message countered by the next piece. 'This Modern Age' manages to hold back the sedative-craving arm just long enough-and then to say quite simply, 'There are two sides to this question; we will take them one at a time. First, the Jews'. It proceeds to do so. It then does as much for the Arabs. Though one has the impression that less space is devoted to them, the balance struck leaves each side equally deserving, each equally blameworthy. The whole approach is feeling and sincere, with a pleasant quality of restraint which colours both commentary and visuals

'This Modern Age, No. 6' is another attentionholding production whose qualities—particularly photography-lead one to hope we may soon forget to compare it with earlier products of the same genre. It will be interesting to see whether the fretful stridency of the March of Doom catches the ears of world audiences more firmly than the reasoned, warmer tones of this latest film periodical.

#### No. 7. Coal Crisis

This is by far the best issue of 'This Modern Age' so far It bears every evidence of careful scripting. and of skilled shooting to the script. It is a diffcult and tricky subject which might easily have been spoiled by timid handling; fortunately the editorial approach adopted is both courageous and clear-headed. Points of fact and points of argument are fairly and squarely presented, and as a result the cinema-going public at large has the opportunity to get a clear understanding of the basic long-term issues behind the fuel crisis.

It is gratifying also to note a great improvement on previous issues as regards the soundtrack. The commentary is brisk and incisive, and the music is not only appropriate but also sparingly used. Its absence when points of major emphasis are made is extremely effective, and certainly much more so than the usual blare of trumpets beloved of screen journalists.

If 'This Modern Age' can keep up to this standard it will be the best series of its type anywhere.

(continued p. 92, col. 3)

## INSIDE INFORMATION ON NON-THEATRICAL DISTRIBUTION

by a TECHNICIAN

scarcely ever does one sit down in a theatre to listen to some sound rushes, or hear a commentator's voice coming out of the monitor room loudspeaker, or see a rough-cut at the C.O.I. theatre, but somebody raises the old query: 'Yes. But how will it come over on 16 mm.?'

The documentary movement is rapidly getting itself all confused over 16 mm. sound. The few people who have bothcred to attend non-theatrical shows have generally come away full of blackest despair. And rightly so. They have circulated horrible stories of invisible picture and inaudible sound. They have possibly sworn that something must be done about it. They have perhaps written to the C.O.I. They have almost certainly blamed the unfortunate recordist who shot the track. But for all the good that has resulted they might just as well have stayed at home.

During the war we had to put up with the best that circumstances could provide. It was a pretty poor best, but conditions were certainly difficult. But now I am convinced that it is high time we all adopted a clearer outlook on this most vexed and most important problem.

From the point of view of a technician I should like to air my views on my side of the affair. I feel fairly strongly about it because when an unintelligible sound track accompanies the visuals at a non-theatrical show, it is invariably the sound engineer who gets the blame. And it is generally not his fault.

To begin with, I want to emphasize that, given a fair break, the I6 mm. sound track can be, for all practical purposes, every bit as good as the 35 mm. version. And I shall be only too happy to prove it to anybody.

But before this can happen every stage in the long, tortuous chain of events must be given at least as much care as the standard film gets. The 16 mm. film has to cope with a rather different set of conditions from the standard cinema. These conditions do not necessarily make it more difficult to produce, but jt is not fair to project any one of a large batch of doubtful optically reduced prints on a glorified toy of a projector in a room with the acoustics of a public lavatory—and to expect perfect reproduction.

What actually does happen? Let us assume that the studio has done its work perfectly. A first class combined print is delivered to the C.O.I. Nobody has any complaints about the sound. If dialect has been used, it has been used intelligently. If there are music or effects, they do not clash with the spoken work. The track is well modulated, and for once the laboratory has hit on the correct density. Everybody is happy and two hundred prints have got to be on nontheatrical circulation by next Monday fortnight.

Somebody orders some combined fine grain prints to send to the optical reduction people. Does anybody examine these prints? Perhaps two or three labs, will produce their quotas of 16 mm. prints in the specified time. Does anybody examine these prints? The C.O.I.'s own film *Shown by Request* proved conclusively that they don't. They are numbered, filed, canned, indexed, labelled, sorted and dispatched. But I am darned sure that nobody bothers to take a look at each print to see that the lab, has been behaving itself.

And even if they did, is there anybody there who knows what to look for? Does the C.O.I. possess a densitometer? And could anybody read it if they did? Does anybody bother to check with the recordist as to what the print density should be? Or tell him which lab. is to be used so that he can take some precautions himself? Does anybody at the Central Film Library know the difference between a gamma and a gadfly?

I have seen prints on circulation which have been so light that the track is almost invisible; tracks so hopelessly under-exposed or under-developed that they had no hope of being intelligible through sheer distortion. Such prints, we know, should never have left the laboratory. But what laboratory is going to bother to be particular when the customer is not?

But let's be generous again. Suppose a good print does find its way into circulation. What happens then? It will be projected by some overworked projectionist in a village schoolroom. Does he attempt to treat the acoustics of the room? When a recordist has to record dialogue under such conditions he takes with him enough felt or other acoustic material to absorb some of the unwanted reflections from the walls and floor. He cannot make a studio out of it, but he can make the difference between usable sound and

uscless sound. But the projectionist is not equipped with enough material often to black-out the hall for the feeble light from his projector to reach the screen. He cannot possibly turn the hall into an acoustically perfect theatre for perhaps one show, but at least he could make the attempt.

And what of his projector? Many of the machines now in use can fairly be described as robust and well-made playthings. But as precision machines intended for the education and instruction of thousands who have no other access to the cinema they are a monstrous and iniquitous waste of money.

A 35 mm. projector in a normal cinema is heavily and rigidly constructed. It is not carted from place to place in a lorry. It does its work in a building intended solely for the purpose. In fact, it has every advantage. But even then it has to have regular servicing. Frequent tests are carried out by competent engineers to see that it is always in perfect condition. But the 16 mm. portable is virtually ignored. It is allowed to go until it stops. Then it is sent back for repair. The projectionist is not provided with the elementary equipment for keeping the soundhead in correct focus or proper alignment. No standard test film is issued to him. He does his best under absurd conditions, but there is no real need for these



## announce further films completed

From: "The Technique of Anaesthesia" Series

Intravenous Anaesthesia Part 2.
Signs and Stages of Anaesthesia.
Carbon Dioxide Absorption Technique.
Respiratory and Cardiae Arrest.
Operative Shock.
Handling and Care of the Patient.
(Available to approved medical audiences only.)

From: "The Health of Dairy Cattle" Series
Hygiene on the Farm.

From the "Soil Fertility" Series
Factors of Soil Fertility.
Lime.
Land Drainage.

#### PENICILLIN

The story of its discovery and development, and the use of penicillin on war easualties.

Other films in production will be announced when completed. Applications for the loan of these films should be made to the Central Film Library, Imperial Institute, London, S.W.7

conditions to exist at all. We cannot expect all at once to have brand new high class machines issued all round, but there are certain elementary precautions which could be taken to see that the show gets half a chance. But nobody seems to care.

That is what seems to me to be so terribly wrong with the whole business. Nobody cares. They say they do. They give pep talks about the enormous social importance of the shows they organize. They haver about the hundreds of thousands of people who see the light of modern social progress through the medium of the nontheatrical cinema. But they don't seem to have the nous to employ a technically efficient department which could give this cinema the chance it deserves. Get the films out in sufficient numbers. See that the copies go to the regions on time. Drag bored people out of the wet into the village hall. Then we've all done our duty. It doesn't matter whether anyone has the faintest idea what the film is all about. The attendance figures look

But this is all assuming that the studio has done its work well, and that a good print has managed to filter through. What happens when the studio has filled the track up with impossibly broad dialect, with a music background so heavy that even on standard projection the dialogue is hard to follow? Or when the laboratory has produced an almost black sound track with the track area well out of alignment? What happens? Well, just you wander along to the next C.O.I. show in your nearest village. You'll see the vicar and his wife, three labourers who have come in because the local's out of beer, two couples taking advantage of the darkness, and half a dozen children. That's what we're making films for. I know that when two or three are gathered together . . . and so on. But is it really worth while?

### GRAPHICS IN CANADA

by GRAHAM McINNES

Co-ordinator of Graphics Division—National Film Board of Canada

formational film project remains the sound film, its value both to sponsor and producerto say nothing of audience—can be greatly enhanced by its considered correlation with other visual media. This at least is the conclusion we have reached in Canada; and if the fact that the National Film Board is equipped to produce all the visual media, more or less under one roof, has had a bearing on that conclusion, the need for well-rounded exposition first showed itself in the field: in the grass roots.

As growing sponsorship by Government departments brought with it a need of guaranteed and specialized distribution, there also arose a demand for a wider and more lasting presentation than was possible through the film alone. The key to the fulfilment of this demand lay with the establishment of a Graphics Division and the setting up of a Liaison Department. Both sections were set up under Grierson's régime, but their function and scope have been greatly enlarged and geared more closely to the film programme by his successor, Ross McLean.

It is now the duty of each member of the Liaison Department to become an expert both on the needs of a group of government departments and on the various visual media which the Film Board can produce. As the Board is partially dependent upon sponsorship for its operating costs, the task of the Liaison Officer

WHILE the spearhead of any educational or in- takes on at times a poignant urgency. He must maintain the closest contact with his opposite number in agriculture or national health, and with the producers concerned; and the midwife's cares weigh heavily upon his shoulders. On to his desk come all the producer's troubles, yet he does not at any time come between the producer and the sponsor when direct contact is necessary. In a sense, however, he protects both producer and sponsor from arbitrary claims advanced by either side, and is responsible for all the contact work which might otherwise occupy the unit manager.

> It is also through him, as often as not, that the various film and non-film producers are brought together with the sponsor round a table and matters of media thrashed out. The Graphics Division of the Board is equipped to produce still pictures, film strips and slides, displays and small exhibitions, wall-sheets, posters, photogelatine sheets, maps, charts and certain publications. The task of convincing a sponsor that what he needs is not 'a film' or 'maybe a small paper display', but a considered combination of possibly several media, falls initially to the Liaison Officer. But he in turn is greatly assisted by co-ordination between the various production units. Though this often means committee meetings and memoranda in quintuplicate rather than the careless rapture of ad hoc production, it also means that the individual producer, while holding prime allegiance to his own medium, sees the informational programmes and problems of the Board as a whole.

> A film producer, in a conference, is just as apt to suggest a filmstrip or a wallsheet as a display producer is likely to suggest a film. Thus we all take in each other's washing and the result is that the sponsor can be assured of his message receiving wide and continual attention, and is, in the long run, more likely to avail himself of the Board's services. There is the further point that, no matter how many media he may wish to use, he is dealing with a single organization and, except during production, often with a single man —the Liaison Officer.

> Such an arrangement has naturally led us in the direction of the visual unit, and our first pilot model, produced for classroom use with the advice of the Films Committee of the Canada and Newfoundland Education Association, is now being tested in Canadian schools. The theme is 'The Policeman' and the unit consists of a one-reel sound film, a half-reel silent film, a film strip in colour and four wall-sheets. It has been designed to appeal to schoolchildren between the ages of six and nine and, if successful, will be followed by others.

> Another venture, sponsored by the Polymer Corporation a Crown\* company producing synthetic rubber—consists of a film, stills coverage of the processes involved, a travelling display. newsreel coverage, a booklet . . . and a Christmas card. In the past year of consolidation, which has involved a certain amount of shortening sail, we have found that nearly all is grist that comes to the NFB mill. Further, the sponsor finds that, unlike the mills of God, we grind them out pretty fast.

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#### CORRESPONDENCE

sir: Why No Labour Films? draws attention to an important field of work. Doreen Willis's article poses the problem and I hope that DNL will not let it go at that. The next two questions are, 'What is to be done?' and 'Who shall do it?'. If the decisions reached and the actions arising out of them are to be realistic it is necessary to be aware of things as they are at present and the reasons for them. 'It might have been hoped that the advent of a Labour Government would automatically have solved it by opening out new vistas of social film-making . . .' Perhaps that is what a lot of people connected with documentary films thought, but why? Nothing ever happens automatically in human society and there is very little evidence in the history of the Labour Movement to suggest that such a thing would happen. Documentary offers a new technique in education especially suitable for the subjects which concern the Labour Movement, but the Movement has shown little interest in education of any sort within itself, much less in new techniques of education. By 'education' I here mean the education of the people in the history, problems and tasks of the working-class in all its aspects, political, economic, social and cultural.

The very success of such documentaries as *Housing Problems* and *The Londoners* is at present a stumbling block to the use of film by the Government and something of the reason why is hinted at in Doreen Willis's remarks about *The Railwaymen* when she says 'But the idea which remained in our heads long after seeing the film was horror at the low rate of wage being offered...'

And what about the working conditions, which in the case of the railway workshops are not regulated by the Factory Acts? How much the same could be said of road and sea transport, iron and steel, brick making, building and textiles. Even in the case of the mines, wages and conditions are still a matter of promise rather than performance. There is still a lot to be done before honest films of these industries can show a prospect that can make a practical appeal to the man who has a home to build or a factory to maintain. Until it is, one can expect a certain amount of diffidence on the part of the authorities who should be sponsoring them. All this does suggest that there is room for short discussion films on these subjects if only their natural sponsors, the Labour Movement, could be induced to embark on them.

If the makers of documentaries still regard film as a pulpit in the service of the people they must be prepared to show initiative in making it so and get down to detailed activity in conjunction with the increasing number of groups and individuals in the Labour Movement who are interested. Nor should they forget that there is considerable TU activity within their own industry whose knowledge and experience should be valuable. Any such activity will almost certainly start in London, but London is not England and they will travel faster if they get things moving in other parts of the country as soon as possible.

Regarding films made or making for the AEU, ETU and NUT & GW, are they going to be shown outside their respective unions and, if so, to what extent? It may not be possible to supply

separate copies for showing by other unions. In that case will invitations be given to leading members of other unions to be present as guests at every show? Are shows going to be given to Trades Councils? Over and above these questions a specially conducted drive would greatly increase demand for the regular use of film as a recognized form of TU activity. It would then be possible to introduce and build up a demand for the regular making of films for the purpose. Films designed to recruit new members and to stir to activity the great mass of dead membership (the 'card-holders' who are the bane of all the active workers) would be widely welcomed. A couple of short films pointing out the possibility of doing this might be prepared by the pooled resources of the documentary industry with the assistance of the trades unionists within its own ranks.

Not so much attention has been given to the Labour Party or the Co-ops. The latter are the more likely starters. But documentary has to face up to this: it is not a large organization compared with these three (Labour, TU and Co-op) and to cover them all it would have to spread itself thinly and so it must give careful attention to how much ground it can cover and which is the most promising to tackle first. Marked success in any one of these is bound to have a deep influence over the others.

As far as the Labour Movement is concerned, a great deal of the future of documentary is bound up with it and the approach to it must not be by chance and haphazard but must be carefully worked out and as carefully put into practice.

Yours faithfully,

A. E. SCARR

In view of the manner of Mr. Scarr's interesting approach to his problem the Editorial Board feels that members of the documentary movement would wish us to point out that documentary, although by its very nature inevitably interested in matters political in so far as they affect social progress, owes exclusive allegiance to no single political party, be it Conservative, Liberal, Labour or Communist.

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MEMBERS OF THE FEDERATION OF DOCUMENTARY FILM UNITS

DOCUMENTARY REVIEWS—continued from p. 89

Fair Rent. Data for C.O.I. *Producer:* Donald Alexander. *Director:* Mary Beales. *Photography:* Suschitsky. *Distribution:* Non-T. 12 mins.

This film manages to pack a deal of good sense and humanity into one reel. It is the simple story of how a poor Aberdeen couple succeed in frustrating the sharp practices of their landlady, with the assistance of the Rent Tribunal.

One might have expected that the need for compression would force a superficial treatment. In fact the couple emerge as real characters and their attitude to the Tribunal, to the landlady, and to their neighbours is conveyed in its changing, developing and conflicting reality. Most people who see this film (and it is to be hoped that it achieves theatrical distribution) will get a big kick out of the defeat of the landlady. Many, like the neighbours of these Aberdonians, will begin to get ideas themselves, thus making life increasingly difficult for the profiteers in homes.

The Scottish Office is to be congratulated on dealing with this subject, and one would only wish that it had been prepared to make a longer film. It would have been interesting to see the actual procedure at a public session of the Tribunal, and it is a pity the opportunity was missed.

#### CORRESPONDENCE—contd.

sir: It is seldom one reads a thoroughly jaundiced review in *DNL*, or one which fails utterly to present a constructive assessment of the film in question. In the last issue, however, appeared a review of *The Bridge* that can be best described as querulous and at worst as irresponsible.

Your reviewer, Mr. X, has gone to some trouble to belittle every aspect of this film. We are to believe that it is technically inept, has an impossible commentary poorly spoken, lacks humanity, and (final crushing argument?) dodges the political issues. I do not propose to deal here with these points, for my technical knowledge would not be equal to the task. In any case, in his destructive zeal Mr X has so contradicted himself that in some cases this is not necessary. But I do want to make one point about *The Bridge*.

This film was made to do a job. That job was to show to people here the ordinary folk of Yugoslavia facing up to the problem of reconstructing their country. That implied, too, the conveying of the new spirit and social set-up of the country and the basic political and subjective attitudes of the people to the job in hand. The film could be judged successful if, in giving an honest account of these things, it at the same time made a contribution to international co-operation and increased the sense of responsibility and solidarity of the British people as far as the people of Yugoslavia are concerned.

Judged on this basis the film has already proved itself. I have been present when it has been shown to four very different audiences: to a group of technicians, to the London Scientific Film Society, to Unity Theatre, and to an audience of 300 Birmingham citizens. It is interesting to see how the reactions of these audiences dispose of various aspects of the criticisms of Mr. X. The LSFS membership has pretty high technical standards and is particularly watchful for lack of integrity or false values in films, yet The Bridge was extremely well received. Unity Theatre audiences are probably the most politically advanced that can be found, yet the one which viewed The Bridge (and the place was packed) did not feel, with Mr. X, that the political point had been neglected. As a matter of fact it was felt that here at last was a clear picture of the way of living of one of the new European democracies which would be of immense value in combating the stories of the yellow press.

However, the reactions of the Birmingham audience are probably the most important, since they were the people for whom the film was really made. Did Mr. X say the film lacked humanity, that there was no warmth in the commentary? I'd like him to have heard the throat clearings at the emotional climax of the film, or the horrified gasp when the commentator drew attention to the fact that Serbia must be very prosperous because the dogs were still alive. At the end there was a long silence-and some surreptitious work with handkerchiefs—then a woman got up and said that she didn't think people would want to discuss the film because it had been too overpowering. A loud murmur of agreement showed that she was expressing a general feeling, but some people did speak, and all stressed how affected they had been and how important it was that they should be able to see such films as The Bridge in the cinemas. The Chairman, a member of the Co-op Education Committee, wound up by saying that she thought the film should be shown throughout the Cooperative Movement, and in particular to the Youth Clubs. It would do much to bring home the responsibility we all had to the people of Yugoslavia, and of Europe generally, and to strengthen the friendship between peoples that can make future wars impossible.

'If only the film had achieved a sense of humanity', wails Mr. X. If only Mr. X had achieved a sense of proportion!

Yours, etc.,

VAL WALKER

sir: Cinè-clubs, to use the French term for film societies, obviously play a large part in non-commercial cinematograph activities, in supplying a critical public with historical and aesthetic documents, in awakening a critical sense in a widening public and, through this influence, in eventually raising the standards of production. The post-war ciné-club movement in France is strong and has a growing public and, perhaps more important for its future development, has a centralized organization in the Fédération Française des Ciné-clubs (formed in 1944) and in the resources of the Cinémathèque, the official film institute which was already working before the war.

The Fédération Française des Ciné-clubs has moral and slight financial support from the Ministry of Education and from the Centre National du Cinéma and this support controls its strictly non-commercial character. An annual general meeting of representatives of the separate ciné-clubs elect an administrative council which, in turn, elects the four directors—the 'Bureau'.

Georges Sadoul is now the secretary and the president is Jean Painlevé who is now with UNESCO. The membership is over 100,000 and, of the 100 clubs registered, 95 are actually functioning now. The role of the Federation's office is, to supply films asked for by ciné-clubs though in practice the choice is limited by the existing stock of Cinémathèque whose offices are in the same building. A journal is planned and desired but barred by financial difficulties; projectionists have been given a special week's training course; a National Congress is planned for June, 1947, and the Comité de Fédération International des Ciné-Clubs hopes to meet in April and represents, among other countries, Belgium, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The individual clubs are constantly growing and are especially strong in Paris. About ninetenths of their leaders are teachers and Bordeaux has the only woman leader. A few clubs, Tunis, Casablanca and Tours among them, run their own reviews. The variety of clubs is tempting and bewildering-perhaps it is lucky that their programmes have less variety. There are clubs serving different communities and tastes-from that of the railwaymen of Hellemes and the industrial workers of the Renault Works and of Bologne-Billancourt to that of Montmartre (which tries to revive a music hall atmosphere), the University and the Club Voyage et Aventure which specializes in 'open-air films'. L'Ecran Français publishes weekly ciné-club programmes and reports special activities.

(continued p. 94, col. 3)

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### NOT GOOD ENOUGH

THE British Film Institute issues a *Monthly Film Bulletin* which is supposedly an authoritative periodical designed to assist all those concerned in the educational, appreciative, and cultural use of the film medium. This bulletin is in fact the only document of its kind published in this country, and one should be able to look to it, not least because of its source of publication, as an authoritative and accurate document.

Following various complaints we have received from readers of the Institute's *Monthly Film Bulletin*, we have asked two separate and unconnected individuals (concerned in the use of films for educational and general non-theatrical purposes) to examine the film reviews in the *Bulletin* over six issues, from July to December, 1946.

As a result, it would appear that there is a great deal wrong with the Institute's system of appraisal and reviewing. There seems to be a lot of confusion over the Institute's much vaunted specialist panels (one would like to have details of how often, and in what numbers, they attend projections) and even greater confusion owing to reviews arbitrarily written by individuals. It is indeed difficult to see what actual reviewing and appraisal system the British Film Institute adopts.

In the interest of film users we give below some critical observations on the *Monthly Film Bulletin* 

We note, for instance, that the films entitled *Flowers*, *Roots*, *Stems*, are dealt with under the classification 'Botany' (p. 104). But *Fruits* (p. 118) is included under 'Science' while *Leaves* and *Pollinations* come under 'Natural History'. All these films, bless you, were reviewed by the Natural History Viewing Committee. All of them, bless you again, are catalogued by the producers, G-B.I. under 'Botany' which seems sensible enough to us. Why, oh why, the confusing cross-references?

Then again, take some overseas films. Mainprusi Village (p. 144) appears under 'Geography' but is viewed by the Educational Panel. Achimota (p. 159) appears under 'Background Films' and is viewed by that Committee. Hausa Village (p. 179) appears under 'Documentary and Interest' and is reviewed by an individual. Apart from the fact that Mamprusi Village and Hausa Village belong to the same series, one wonders what the Bulletin boys arc really up to, especially when one finds that films on Bali and Trinidad are reviewed by the Geography Panel while Sisal and Tree of Wealth are reviewed by the Educational Panel. Incidentally, Tree of Wealth is described by the Educational Panel Viewing Committee as 'the best Indian film the viewers have seen'. But over a period of eighteen months they've only seen three—so, one asks, what weight does such an assessment carry?

Now let's take Man—One Family. On p. 119 it is reviewed as a 'documentary and interest film' and is praised as authoritative, with the phrase (we quote) 'cannot fail to make an impression upon every type of audience'. Later, however, it is reviewed as a background film, and in this case it is remarked that 'though it should certainly be appreciated by abler members of youth clubs and senior schoolchildren, a good introductory talk would make it easier to assimilate'. That may be true enough, but why

obfuscate the reader with two separate assess-

Enormous fun and games has been had by someone over Instruments of the Orchestra. This is an official Ministry of Education film made for schoolchildren. It has also been theatrically released through M.G.M. because, not perhaps unnaturally, it has 'popular appeal' (adults are inclined that way the same as children). On p. 162 this film is reviewed by an individual under the heading of 'documentary and interest'. There is a note to say that at a later date it will be reviewed 'in the Education Section by a panel of music teachers'. Will they review it as a 'documentary and interest' film, or what? In any case the existing review was clearly written by someone who knows nothing about music, which seems a pity, but there it is. No musical chap could solemnly write 'the orchestra plays excerpts from the Fugue by Benjamin Britten on a theme by Purcell'. The film, in case you haven't seen it, presents 15 variations and a fugue on a Purcell theme.

All we would like to know is—why is there, apparently, no coherent planning of reviews in the *Bulletin*, and why, in particular is the B.F.I. so self-satisfied about it. In its Annual Report it claims that it has 'almost reached the limits of what it can undertake with reasonable efficiency'. If it comes to efficiency, it looks as though the 'limits of what' area is already out of sight.

#### CORRESPONDENCE—continued from p. 93

The clubs are, therefore, flourishing and popular but the programmes are perhaps less encouraging. There is much less opportunity to see scientific films than in London even though the pioneer films of Painlevé are given occasional public showings and the resumed annual congresses of the Institute of Scientific Cinematography, at Paris, are reported as excellent but only reach a small international audience. The ordinary programmes consist of one feature film not in commercial release accompanied by a short. There is a repetition and a lack of variety. This was probably inevitable in the early days and with the limited resources of the Federation and there has been some improvement in the past year. The great majority of films shown are French and include several early films of Carné (it was amusing to detect in them Jean-Louis Barrault, now brilliant in Les Enfants du Paradis). The foreign films come from Russia, Mexico, Denmark, Italy, Germany, Britain and America. The greatest and most obvious gap is that of documentaries. It is a pity that the progress and change in British documentary during war-time should be almost unknown here and that such films as Night Mail and Drifters should be the only examples shown. Apparently there are certain difficulties which might be eased by UNESCO and by co-operation from the British producers. It is certainly to be hoped that something will be done to bring more recent British documentaries to France and to enable them to be seen by the French ciné-clubs.

Yours, etc.,

RUTH PARTINGTON

(continued p. 95, col. 3)

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### **BOOK REVIEWS**

Edition). Price Is.

Twenty Years of British Film 1925-1945, Michael Balcon, Ernest Lindgren. Forsyth Hardy, Roger Manyell.

Contemporary Cinema. Published in association. with the Church of England Films Commission and the Film World. Editor, The Rev. G. L. Wheeler, 'Contemporary Cinema', The Vicarage, Thornton-le-Fylde, Blackpool, Lancs. Monthly, price 6d.

The new edition of Manvell's Film is welcome for two special reasons. It should go some way towards satisfying the enormous demand for the book aroused by earlier editions and-for the critical reader of the original work-there is much satisfaction to be derived from the manifold changes which have been made in the text. In DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER'S review of the first edition our reviewer dealt somewhat harshly with a book full of the best intentions towards documentary. He found a spate of textual inaccuracies and an over-intellectual attitude towards the functions of the factual film. But in his new edition Dr. Manvell has made handsome amends. The chapter on documentary has been completely rewritten with the assistance of new material which has lately become available and now presents a first-rate account of this section of the film field. The new stills are good and the only major criticism is the abbreviation of the indices of film titles and names. Surely, for the sake of a few extra pages, a full index would have more than justified itself as a guide to the exploration of what is now-amongst many other entertaining things—a valuable work of reference.

Twenty Years of British Film is a beautifully produced book from the Falcon Press. There are a hundred excellently reproduced stills, many of them being refreshingly new scenes from the old familiar films (the 'stock' still has become something of a menace in the cinema's critical works). Unfortunately, the text scarcely reaches the level of the rest of the book. Michael Balcon, Ernest Lindgren, Forsyth Hardy and Roger Manvell are over-conscious of their weary passage over old ground. Only the last-named attempts something more than unadorned, uninterpreted history. You may not accept his analysis of the special characteristics of the modern British feature film and it may well be over-optimistic to talk about 'a cinematic poetry peculiar to British films'. But many of Manvell's observations on the wide variety of subject-matter and treatment emanating from British studios were well worth making. It may be that we are insufficiently conscious of the flexibility which the medium has found in British hands.

Contemporary Cinema makes a modest start with facts and opinions (in part from Michael Balcon) on the relationship between the cinema and the church. This new magazine will need courage if it is to probe fearlessly into the question of what each of these two 'mass media' has to offer the other. But the job must be done some day and there has never been a better time than the present, Coutemporary Cinema will regularly contain reviews of feature and documentary films contributed by Roger Manvell.

Film. Roger Manyell. Penguin Books (New The Factual Film. (Oxford University Press. 12s. 6d.)

> In its own restrained way this is rather a frightening work. To begin with it looks so darn cold and official. The careful blue of its impeccably laid out cover, the quiet type and the wording, 'The Arts Enquiry. The Factual Film. A Survey. Oxford University Press', could, except for the terrible vulgarity of the word Film, grace a report on further discoveries at Knossos or the incidence of left-handedness among the Pre-Raphaelites. The book sets out to report on the factual film and this job it does admirably, but what it also does is to show you that you can never be too careful; a maxim more suitable for a nineteenth century copy-book than for a documentary film maker's credo. Maybe Grierson knew he was starting something that would one day be the subject of 'A Survey', but it is doubtful if all the people who followed him with De Vry and Newman Sinclair thought that one day their work would result in an Arts Enquiry. It is probably just as well that they did not; the coming event might have cast a rather ponderous shadow over the rushes.

> The documentary or, if you will, the factual film movement is still a living thing and what this valuable work does is to freeze it for a moment so that those who wish may have a look at it. If, in this pose of unaccustomed immobility, it looks at times faintly ridiculous so also does a still shot of Wooderson running or a once lively salmon stuffed on the parlour wall. But if you wish for information about the factual film, here it is. Its subject index ranges from the Aberdeen Film Society to Lady Yule, evidence that its interests are wide, and its film index takes us from one war to another via A.B.C.A. and Zeebrugge. Between its covers you can find information about the factual film in war, in education and in the cinemas. There are sections on the news film and on the international use of film and among the four appendices there is a useful section on the British Film Industry as a

> It must be admitted that the work suffers a little from the fact that it went to press in October, 1945, and was not published until January of this year. Many things happened in this fourteen-month period and of necessity some of its contents are a little out of date while some of its recommendations (conceivably because of their private circulation before publication) have already been put into practice. It is, also, a little difficult to understand why 'the group of experts' who are the authors of the report are quite so coy about their names being attached to it. The Foreword says that, 'As some have held official or semi-official positions it was agreed that members of the group should remain anonymous'. Now why this hiding of lights, this reluctance to admit parenthood? No report is ever quite unbiased and it is only right that the reader should have some chance of assessing the value of the more controversial paragraphs by knowing the names of the people who wrote them. It is silly to look as though you are trying to bury the body when in fact you are only feeling terribly modest.

> Apart from this The Factual Film is a most useful work and, indeed, one of great value. But

no documentary film maker should be allowed to read it. Making history, on whatever scale, and writing about it are two very different things and present day factual films will be none the worse for their makers being unconscious of the fact that one day their titles may appear in the index of a chastely produced book.

16 Mil. Film User. Published monthly by Current Affairs Ltd. Edited by Bernard Dolmar. 1s.

This little monthly is an excellent publication filling a gap between the popular film magazine and the trade paper. It caters for the needs and interests of all 16 mm. users whether as individuals or in clubs, schools, or churches. Well classified lists of reviews are given and there are valuable articles on the actual technique of projection and on various developments in the realm of the 16 mm. film. The writing of the articles and the choice of the subjects are on a high level and each issue contains a very catholic selection of material. Apart from the cover pages the layout is pleasant and the illustrations are chosen for their instructional value rather than simply as pictures.

In fact, 16 Mil. Film User, in spite of its ghastly name, is a really useful publication with the additional factor (and how important a factor) of making quite good reading.

#### CORRESPONDENCE—continued from p. 94

SIR: MARG: A Magazine of Architecture and Art, Bombay, carries an interesting 300-word note under the above heading in Vol. 1, No. 1. Kalpana is the first film of Uday Shankar, and is in production now at the Gemini Studios, Madras.

Many people will remember Uday Shankar's London season, when he and his company performed so brilliantly in the Karthak and Karthakali dance idioms, dispensing almost entirely with stage-properties, their imaginary presences and uses being intimated through the use of an expressive mimicry. This makes particularly interesting Marg's note, which includes:

Shankar has evolved a brilliant and original technique of his own, which will be something startling and revolutionary in the film world. In interpreting his story, he depends more on the delineation of every shade of feeling and emotion through facial expressions and gestures than on dialogues, which are reduced to the minimum.

A great part of the story is interpreted through a variety of dances—which number as many as 80-representing all the classical and folk forms. The masterly way in which they have been photographed, with a skilful manipulation of light and shade, gives them a three dimensional effect, with a realistic background of beautiful and varied landscapes, which makes one forget that they have been shot within the four walls of the Gemini Studio.

The classical dance-forms of India would seem to be particularly suited to the making of such a film as Kalpana, which is intended to be a vehicle of Shankar's 'ideals of life and art', since they involve expression through the whole body of the dancer: a stylized code of mannerisms and gestures, not difficult to understand, brings ranges of experience within the grasp of the Indian dancer that remain wholly alien to

(continued p. 96, col. 2)

### THE RECEIVING END

#### L. Helliwell protests against the inadequate distribution of **Documentaries**

WHEN, oh! when is more attention going to be paid to the distributive side of documentaries? Much human endeavour, much brilliance and sincerity is put into the making of a film; one would suppose that equal endeavour and sincerity would be employed in getting it to the people who would enjoy and appreciate the effort made. However brilliant a film is, its value lies only in the influence it brings to bear on those who see it-the finest film ever made, unless seen by an audience, is not a film. This surely must be appreciated by the creators, and yet, despite the tepth of thought and wealth of talent employed, interest seems to die at the moment of comple-

I like documentaries. I live in a city of nearly 300,000 inhabitants, but can I see a representative selection of 'reality' films? No! Occasionally one is included in the cinema programmes but it is never an attraction per se, and is only utilized in a haphazard and time-filling capacity. You can almost hear the film magnate's 'If you must have your  $2\frac{1}{2}/3$  hours show, you'll have to sit through this'. Is all this (to use the DNL's phrase) 'creative interpretation of reality' to remain for ever in such ignominy?

In this city of 300,000 people you can see feature films at the local cinema, or join the city film society to learn film technique and appreciation-both occupations which I heartily enjoy. To a lover of the documentary, however, the latter is like having the after-dinner liqueur without having had the dinner.

I said above I like documentaries. I do more: it is one of my duties to arrange a winter session of documentary and interest films. This is frankly an 'education through interest' movement by aligning films, speakers and books on a theme, together, at the same time. Normally, I use 2, 3 or 4 films of differing subjects but capable of being associated together to develop the theme, the speaker enlarging on the primary aspect, or providing the necessary cohesion between films.

Anyone familiar with the film movement will immediately perceive the difficulty of 'partnering' films for thepurpose in view and the, usually, impossible, task of replacement if the desired film is not available. In this way each winter I use approximately 50 documentary and interest films of lengths between 10 and 40 minutes. You may say—'No easy task!' Indeed, it is not.

Here we reach the whole crux of my problem and, I believe, the testing point of all uses of the documentary. Films are made to earn a profit. With that statement there can be no argument, but are the makers of documentaries satisfied with the method by which this return is obtained; that their creative artistry is casually accepted as a regrettable but necessary obligation; when the whole conditions of showing tend to destroy the inherent value of the film? What can be good in one setting can be wasted in another. Does not a producer of documentaries ever say to himself, 'Is it worth while?' when he sees his work, not thrown away, but failing to get the full reception and appreciation it deserves?

I said above that films are made for profit and to obtain this profit they must be given the wrong setting. To exhibit them in their most useful surroundings is not an economic proposition. From these two facts there seems to be no

My programme is not the best way of showing documentaries, but it is better than casual inclusion amongst feature films. I have a strongly appreciative public, but economically speaking, I am much too small fry to receive due consideration from the big film distributors, who, reasonably enough, are little interested in non-theatrical exhibitions, which bring small returns.

There, above, are two aspects of the same problem—a private citizen's inabi'ity to see the films he wishes and an official's difficulty in obtaining the films to exhibit. You may protest at once that the one outrules the other. That is true to a certain extent—but it is incidental.

Briefly stated, that is the situation at present, What of the future? If the documentary film is to have the success it deserves every town and city of appreciable size will have a documentary cinema or club on the lines of the present film societies, but before this desirable end is obtained the distribution of the documentary will have to

Now that producers have associated themselves in the Federation of Documentary Film Units, is it not possible to have a similarly centralized distributing agency? This would greatly simplify the work of any club organizer and would be a boon to anyone whose duties are similar to mine

Regarding the other trouble, the cost of hiring documentaries, is it not possible to have one or two copies of each film kept strictly for nontheatrical shows at considerably reduced fees? The immediate loss of income would be compensated by the wider distribution and the satisfaction of getting the film to the public it deserves and the public who welcome it. This suggestion will be viewed with scandalized amazement by film magnates, but the fact remains that documentary is still fighting for its merited appreciation, and will continue to do so whilst its energies are dissipated in the casual bookings of today.

#### CORRESPONDENCE—continued from p. 95

Russian-trained dancers. This, combined with the minimal use of dialogue to which Marg's reviewer refers, makes Kalpana a film which could profitably be brought within the experience of the West. London exhibitors, and film societies are beginning to grow out of the idea that 'foreign' films must be Hollywood, French, or German, and are screening the productions of other countries. If London could support a Russian season of more than four years at the Tatler, and can keep the first Danish talkie we have ever seen running for months at the Academy, it is surely not too venturesome to suggest that Kalpana might enjoy a short season here? Indian films must someday be screened. for enjoyment and criticism, in London, and, if eventually why not now? This seems from its advance publicity to be as good a film as any, and better than most, to start with.

Yours, etc.,

F. J. BROWN

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### A Tribute to

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It had been hoped to publish in this space an announcement of the Carl Mayer Lund performance which was held in the Scala Theatre on Sunday, April 13th.

Unfortunately much of the publicity material for the performance, including this advertisement, was held up by the fuel crisis and it is feared that the receipts, which are being devoted to the Carl Mayer Fund, will have been seriously affected.

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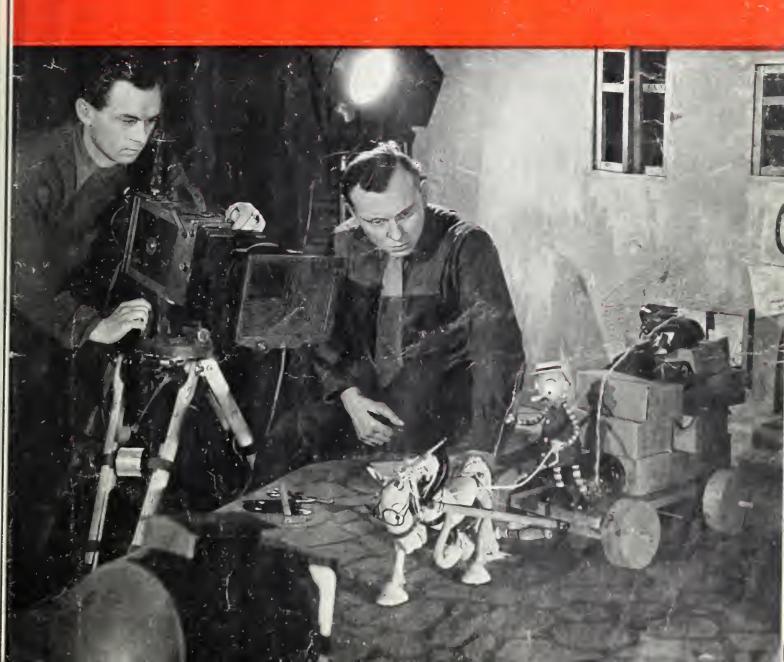
# DOCUMENTARY

EWS LETTER

JUNE-JULY 1947

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### LABOUR PAINS

Confusion in the public information services is becoming worse confounded. While a punch-drunk COI staggers round the ring, boxing its own shadow and failing to avoid a hail of administrative uppercuts, a rival ring appears to be being erected for a demonstration round by the Information Officer for the Production Campaign under Sir E. Plowden.

The aimlessness of our public information services today may be directly traced to the failure of the Labour Government to realize the basic necessities of those services. True, they did not abolish the Government information organization as the Tories would have done. But in getting rid of the Ministry of Information, which, for all its faults, had succeeded in providing the right mixture of stimulus and information over a period of six difficult years, a fundamental error was made. The Information Services were deprived of status, of ministerial representation in the House, and, to a large degree, of those immediate powers of initiation and creation without which it is almost impossible for them to survive.

The principles of public information demand, firstly, the establishment of a working relationship between creative workers and administrative workers, based on mutual understanding of purpose and method; secondly, a simple channel through which directives and policy may reach the information people, and, thirdly, the provision of the maximum freedom (having regard to the need to check carefully all expenditure of public moneys) for the creative and technical experts whose job it is to translate information into terms of the mass-media of communication.

There are two main methods by which these principles can be achieved. The first is by the creation of a specific department with a Minister of Cabinet status under whom it directly works. This was in essence the wartime method. The second is by the creation of a National Board, representative of the Government, the administrative machine, and the public, with at least one Minister as a member and chairman, who again would be the spokesman of the information services in the House. This is, in essence, the method adopted by the Canadian Government.

The status of the Central Office of Information represents an uneasy and almost cowardly compromise between these two methods and as a result it is unable to fulfil the three principles of information either with speed or with efficiency.

Structurally, it is unwieldy. Its job is to fulfil the informational needs of Government Departments, and of Downing Street, vis-ā-vis the public at large, but the machine is so full of cogs and pulleys many of them duplicated—that it is reminiscent more of Heath Robinson or Rube Goldberg, than of the technological age. Its domination by two committees of PROs and two Ministers—the one concerned with overseas, and the other with home matters—is bad enough. Worse still is the general effect of watertight departmentalization at a time when most major public issues cannot be regarded as the perquisite of any single department, but rather as a reflection of the activities of whole groups of departments.

Psychologically, the COI suffers acutely from its status as an 'Agency'. Although this word can be regarded as active, rather than passive, in intent, its interpretation under the existing set-up is likely to be in the direction of passivity, both internally and from the point of view of the user departments. Information budgets, like all other budgets, are limited. Departments are compelled to use the COI for their information programmes (quite rightly, since otherwise chaos would ensue), and are therefore inclined to press violently for maximum attention to their own programmes. On the other hand, the COI, finding itself torn between thirty or so separate programmes which are bound to total something much in excess of the overall budget, has no direct court of appeal other than the unwieldy structure at the top, which, incidentally, includes the assembled PROs of all the departments concerned.

Moreover, the creative aspect of information demands the initiation, by the COI itself, of specific plans and programmes; and for the reasons already stated this important aspect of its work seems to be being pushed more and more to the wall.

The whole question of public information must be examined afresh. If necessary the COI must be written off as a costly experiment, and a fresh start made. This is a task to which Mr Herbert Morrison might well turn his immediate attention. For a start, he might re-read the recommendations of the Arts Enquiry Report on the Factual Film, the constitution of the Canadian Wartime Information Board and National Film Board, and, not least, a confidential document, believed to have been drawn up for him by John Grierson in 1946, when the constitution of the COI was under consideration. In any case, something must be done, and done quickly.

### NOTES OF THE MONTH

The cover picture on this issue is a production still from the Czechoslovakian Puppet film

Mr Prohouk's Conversion which was shown in London at the Festival

#### The New Board

THE ALERT READER will observe that the size of DNL's Editorial Board has considerably increased. The new names listed on our masthead include some which are familiar outside as well as inside the documentary film movement, and all have been linked with important achievements in their field. The expansion has been decided upon as a means of increasing its representative character and of adding to the number of documentary groups whose view-point DNL will seek to express. It has for some time been felt in Film Centre and amongst the older members of the Board that means should be found of putting DNL at the disposal of the maximum number of documentary film-makers to form a link between them and the public which they serve. The extension of the Board can be regarded as a step in this direction.

#### Silent Slaves!

sometimes the film industry takes our breath away. There are certain sections of it which appear to be of the opinion that the big world is just an alley off Wardour Street and that those benighted people unfortunate enough to be denied a habitation in the Street itself must on no account venture to lift an eyebrow in criticism of what goes on in that resplendent gunman's grotto. We are thinking particularly of the recent suggestion that certain BBC scripts should be submitted to Wardour Street before being broadcast. The idea that the film critic should regard himself as a servant of the film industry is not new but things are coming to a pretty pass when the public itself is moved into the same category. Or can it be that some of our friends in Wardour Street really do think that the primary function of the British public is to present itself in the guise of a flock of sheep to await, in all docility, the Wardour Street shearing?

#### The National Theatre Club

THE ROYALTY THEATRE in Dean Street, disused for many years, has been purchased by National Theatre Club Ltd., a new non-profit-making company. Chairman of the Company is the Rt Hon Alfred Barnes, present Minister of Transport, who, it will be remembered, was first Chairman of the People's Entertainment Society, until his resignation on his appointment to the Government.

Plans have already been completed for the entire reconstruction of the interior of the building as a modern theatre-cinema, with restaurants and other club services, including residential accommodation. It is planned to present orchestral concerts and dances for members, in addition to films and stage performances of every type. The policy of the Club with regard to films is not yet decided, being dependent on the decisions of the membership, but it seems likely that it could be made available as a very convenient *venue* for film society shows and other private performances.

It is hoped that club facilities will be available by the end of this year. The date for the re-opening of the theatre is not yet announced, being dependent on building difficulties, but no great delays are expected. The growth of this new entertainment centre in Soho will be watched with great interest. Membership is already

available, at three guineas a year for London members, and one and a half guineas for those living outside.

#### Cambridge and Film

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY now has an Educational Film Council. Set up at a meeting in February, the Council has just issued a leaflet stating its aims and objects. Cambridge has always taken a keen interest in films, and it is right and proper that it should be the first major University to form such a Council. In addition to stimulating the use of films in Cambridge, the Council aims to link up with people interested in visual education in other Universities. A great deal can come from the lead which Cambridge has given.

#### Information, please

WE LEARN FROM John Curthoys that he is planning a book on 'The Development and Technique of the Film Strip as a Visual Instructional Aid'. He says it is to be the first standard work on this subject and tells us that information on the earliest days of this new aid to learning is exceedingly sparse. We have promised to pass on to him any information which our readers may have on this subject.

#### The Survey of Surveys

FOR SOME TIME now DNL has been irked by the embarrassing fact that it is at present conducting no questionnaire. All reputable organizations should today be ready to cross-examine the public on any and every subject of outstanding, moderate or no interest, and we propose to remedy our own lack at the earliest possible moment. We have wisely decided to devote some considerable attention to the framing of the questions. We are given to understand by expert practitioners in this field that only by the most skilled wording of the question, can one be confident of the satisfactory nature of the answer. So far, we are only completely happy with two of our own question-framing attempts and we feel that our readers will not abuse the confidence we place in them when we reveal that the public of Great Britain and Northern Ireland will shortly be invited to let us have the benefit of its opinions on the following matters:

- (1) If you are looking for a film brilliantly imaginative in theme and incredibly polished in treatment would you prefer to see
  - (a) An intolerably bad second feature film, atrociously photographed and edited, with an imbecile commentary?
- or (b) A spanking documentary which is both brilliantly imaginative in theme, and incredibly polished in treatment?
- (2) Which do you believe to be of the greater importance and social significance
  - (a) An important and socially significant documentary?
- or (b) An unimportant and socially insignificant non-documentary?

We feel that the answers to these questions will leave the world in no doubt whatsoever as to the wide extent and overwhelming nature of the demand for an increased showing of documentaries in the cinemas.

### THE BRITISH CINEMA AT THE GALLUP

EACHERS and sociologists in this country have at last begun to take serious interest in the cinema and the part it plays in public life. One can instance the storms which have blown up in educational ircles over Saturday morning Children's Cinema Clubs, and the arious sociological inquiries which have been conducted recently. Now it is the turn of the film industry itself to take note of its public,

ind to observe its shifting moods.

Most important is the news that Dr Gallup is to come to this ountry. His mission, apparently, is to give British film-makers a esson in how to be scientific about judging the tastes and opinions of the einema-going public. One remembers that Mr Eric Johnston who has taken over the well-known Hays office) visited Britain only 1 few months ago to give similar instruction in Hollywood's idea of norality in the einema. Between Dr Gallup and Mr Johnston the primrose path which the British producer is being asked to walk promises to be distinctly uncomfortable. In the States the film indusry has always been concerned with keeping on the right side of its patrons for reasons best known to us all. Today, mounting production costs have accentuated Hollywood's fears, and one of the emedies it has flown to is scientific audience research. Without wanting to throw any doubts on the methods of sampling used (Dr Gallup has a number of accurate forecasts to his credit, particularly n the last few Presidential elections), one cannot help wondering what will be the result if such methods are applied willy-nilly to filmnaking. After all, film-making is an art and art so often resides in the inexpected. Carefully formulated prescriptions for the would-be creative worker, whether they issue from the art academy, the corresbondence course or Dr Gallup's 'pulse chart', are never very sure guides. But after all it isn't art which Dr Gallup is concerned with, for even the public pulse, it is first and foremost the public pocket. The Kinematograph Weekly for May 1st reprints a very illuminating article from the American journal The Screen Writer. It deals with the Gallup method of measuring the box-office value of films and contains this statement among others by Dr Gallup:

'Our reports rate "audience reception value"—that is, report the proportion of those who like the story idea and those who do not. Always, the likes and dislikes are in proportion to the amount of money each group normally spends at the box-office, by age, by sex,

by income group, etc.

'Audience Research cannot tell a producer whether or not a story s worth \$20,000, \$100,000, or \$500,000, but ARI can point out that this story starts with initial interest equal to, greater than or less than other properties which were sold for \$20,000, \$100,000 or \$500,000.

Nothing could be more explicit than that.

The other public inquiry which has received attention recently is the Bernstein Film Questionnaire. It differs in many respects from Dr Gallup's Audience Research Inc. Whereas Dr Gallup aims to like account of public reaction to films in the producer's interest, Mr Bernstein's Questionnaire sets out to discover the public's reactions as they affect the exhibitor. Mr Bernstein is the owner of the Granada circuit of cinemas and the questionnaire (which is the sixth in a series first started in 1927) was circulated to the patrons of his zinemas. According to reports in the Press 217,400 questionnaires in all were answered. At first sight this may seem quite a substantial sample. On the other hand, no evidence has been provided in the Report about the distribution of the people replying, according to sex, age, occupation, income-group, etc. The fact has also to be taken into account that of the 36 cinemas in the Granada Circuit, 20 are in suburban areas in London and the Home Counties, 4 in Shrewsbury, 2 each in Bedford, Rugby and Mansfield. With little or no representation from the Midlands and North and with poor regional distribution generally, one must weight the findings accordingly. The

questions asked cover a fairly wide range, though a number are of small general interest. Compared with the last Bernstein Questionnaire of 1937 it is perhaps interesting to note that British stars for the first time head the list of favourite actors and favourite actresses, i.e. James Mason and Margaret Lockwood. More relevant are the expressions of taste in the matter of types of films and programme length and composition: 70 per cent want 3-hour programmes; but only 20 per cent are in favour of a single-feature programme, though it is possible that people do not quite realize the kind of variety which could be introduced into the supporting programme. The question about single-feature programmes is framed as follows: Do you prefer one long film, news-reel, short and organ solo? This does not appear a particularly clear question, and it is fogged by the introduction of the organ solo. (A later question shows that those who prefer a short film out-number those who want an organ solo by 50 per cent.) This of course raises the problem, on which so many questionnaires come to grief, of exactly how questions should be worded. It is very difficult to frame a question in such a way that it will ellicit the type of answer required without biasing that answer in advance.

The report has some interesting reactions about cinema-going habits. 50 per cent say that they go to the cinema regularly, choosing the one with the best film, and 21 per cent go for particular filmswhich indicates a higher degree of selection than one might have imagined. 66 per cent say they go to a particular cinema because it has the best film. But it is a human failing to want to give the impression of acting at all times from deliberate choice, however untrue that might be.

As for actual films or types of films, the answers show a marked preference, in feature films, for drama, followed by adventure and crime. Strong dislikes are expressed of horror and cowboy films and of full-length cartoons. In the case of short films, cartoons, news magazines, travel and sport head the list of likes, and social developments and science the list of dislikes. It is difficult to know whether the various categories used to describe features and shorts are explicit enough. Superficially the answers would suggest, among other things, a strong bias against documentary films. On the other hand, when a further question asked which of 36 selected films were considered to be the best, one finds that the list is headed by The Way to the Stars (a story-documentary), The Captive Heart (another documentary type picture) is third, and True Glory (a pure documentary made by the combined US and British Service Film Units) is sixth. At the same time all three films were convincing and wellmade, which suggests, as one would imagine, that it is the quality and authenticity of the film which appeals and not the eategory into

That is yet another of the difficulties which those who draw up questionnaires must face, and one of the most important. Statistical inquiries can provide a great deal of useful information, particularly of a quantitative kind, but they cannot assess quality, nor the power of ideas or imagination. Whatever Mr Bernstein's questionnaire or Dr Gallup's pulse charts may say, some films will succeed and others fail for reasons which cannot be pin-pointed on a chart. In as far as the making and showing of films is an industry, market research is a very necessary activity. But one is forced to remember how limited is the choice and type of film at present offered to the public in the ordinary commercial cinema. By comparison the much criticized BBC, for example, provides a great richness and variety of entertainment. One should therefore beware of the techniques of market research being employed not to widen the scope of cinema entertainment but to restrict it even further to the conventional film forms and to accepted themes, with no real thought for the public interest.

### SHAKESPEARE ON THE SCREEN

### AND ON THE AIR

This article is the substance of a lecture delivered to American and English teachers at a Shakespeare study-course organized by the British Council at Stratford-on-Avon in April 1947.

IT IS hardly possible to write about the presentation of Shakespeare without being controversial. With all proper apologies, therefore, I propose to begin with two categorical statements about Cinema and Radio, which must serve as my basic terms of reference in this article. Here they are:

First, the Cinema is an art. It is the first and only new art form to be discovered by man within recorded history. He could not have discovered it earlier because it is the child of the industrial revolution. It is the one positive creative discovery of the machine age, for it depends for its existence on machinery, chemical processes and electricity. It is an art because it represents the end of that quest for representation of life *in movement* which began when the cave men of Altamira painted those leaping figures on the walls of their caverns. Despite the sound track, it is an art because it is visual.

Second, Radio is not an art form—though I am sure that with the development of television it will become so—for with visuals it will take on the basic creative attributes of the film. But at present it is mainly the transmitter of other art—music, and, as we shall see, in a way special to itself, of drama.

With this preamble—all too categorical because it must be all too brief—I would now like to put before you some ideas about the method by which, through radio and film, the work of the world's greatest poet and dramatist can be brought to millions who might otherwise never know or understand him. For film and radio are mass media. They can reach everyone all the time. So, whatever the problems of technique and of interpretations, no one can argue against the need to use these media to bring Shakespeare to the world.

We can best see the problem by starting from the written word.

I suspect that the average reader of Shake-speare's plays is impressed more by the poetry than by the drama. Many people have ordinary natural limitations to their imagination, to seeing in their mind's eye. And a Shakespeare text is not, like a text by Shaw or Barrie, plentifully garnished with explicit stage directions. Poetry, and the drama arising from the interplay of character—these are easily obtainable from reading Shakespeare—but for the rest, surely all of us would confess that to see a Shakespeare play performed for the first time is, quite precisely, a revelation. The physical and spatial characteristics have not been fully imagined by the reader. On the stage something quite new appears.

To pick up the text of *Love's Lubour's Lost* and read it for the first time may be confusing and rather disappointing to anyone who is neither a scholar nor a person of the theatre, nor endowed with an exceptional imagination. To read the same play with the assistance of Harley Granville Barker's preface is in itself a revelation—for he speaks largely of the *living* play—that is, how it can be staged and how, in terms of the theatre of his own day, Shakespeare expected it to be staged.

Finally, if you have the good luck to see it well performed, then it is magic; and there, at last, is Shakespeare's work itself. From now on you can re-read the play with your mind's eye clear and focussed.

Now the technique of radio, despite its lack of visuals, does provide an opportunity of enlarging appreciation and understanding. Shakespeare's words are, after all, written to be spoken, and the interplay of fine voices speaking fine lines supplies a means of interpretation, and of heightening the emotions. This holds true, only if the powers and limitations of the medium are understood. Radio producers and radio actors have to remember that the images they are creating in the listener's imagination are changing like waves on the sea. Each listener is seeing a different picture, which he draws for himself under the stimulus of the spoken word—that is, from what is said and the way it is said.

But there is not a common stage picture, shared by all the audience, such as you have in the theatre. The rumbustious or the rhetorical—effective if you can see *in propria persona* the scene, the actor, and his gestures—become, as often as not, idiotic through the loudspeaker.

And so the production of Shakespeare on the air must be regarded as analogous more to the performance of a symphony than of a stage play. Some listeners will have their eyes shut, and will be picturing to themselves faces, gestures, rooms and landscapes. Others may be following the work in the score, as it were—and they, too, will be seeing something beyond the printed page. The voices of the actors therefore must be related to this situation, and not to the stage of an imaginary theatre packed with an imaginary audience. Otherwise they will find that their words have vanished 'into the air, and what seemed corporal melted as breath into the wind'. In fact, to present Shakespeare on the radio depends on a complete understanding of the diverse nature of the listener's imagination. As one sort of listener I object violently to the use of descriptive commentary to explain the action. On the other hand, I do not in any way object to the use of sound (be it music or otherwise) to add perspective to the scenes which am imagining to myself. But another listener may hold exactly the opposite views. And neither producer nor actor has any opportunity of knowing, or feeling, how this multifarious audience is reacting.

I am not a radio man, and must speak with deference, but I believe that Shakespeare on the radio is best when the producer devotes all his energy to the speaking of the words by the right voices, and uses the other means at his disposal—commentary, effects, music, to the minimum. For him, Shakespeare is the imagist more than anything else. Images created by words—as for instance the description of Cleopatra's barge, and of Antony in the emptied market place.

This is the very point at which we may turn to the film. What a shooting script is to be found in that famous speech! You can imagine it in Technicolor, directed by Cecil B. de Mille. It would be the climax to a previous sequence showing Caesar and his friends making 'the night light with drinking'—'eight wild boars roasted whole for breakfast' and 'much more monstrous matter of feast' (—a challenge to de Mille there!) Then the golden and purple barge, the cupids, the mermaid-gentlewomen, the multicoloured fans, the enormous crowd surging from the market-place to the river banks . . . .

There would in fact be only two things missing—the 'strange invisible perfume', and the poetry

Of course this approach to filming Shakespeare is a *reductio ad absurdum*. It would lead us into surrealist madness with a similar Technicolor technique being applied to Macbeth's:

'this my hand will rather The multitudinous seas incarnadine, Making the green one red'.

The whole point of the Cleopatra speech is that it is a description of something which has happened (lifted from Plutarch and transmuted by Shakespeare into pure poetry), and the film producer's problem is not to translate what it describes into visuals but so to present it that both its poetry and its dramatic relevance to the story are emphasized and pointed.

Now, in the film, we have the genuine image, observed in common by all the audience, and not the mind's-eye image of the radio. Therefore the filmic approach basically is to Shakespeare the dramatist. But this must not be taken to mean that a film performance of Shakespeare can be considered as equivalent to a stage performance. That idea would lead us to put the actor on a stage, and place the camera in the middle of the stalls, and thus merely to record what the audience in a theatre would see. But that is not cinema. The whole quality of the film resides in the fact that it creates its own geography and its own time. That is, the spectator's viewpoint is constantly changing, and his temporal sense can be elongated or shortened according to the editing of the various strips of celluloid of which the film is made up.

The perfect film is, of course, conceived right from the start only as a film, and not as a translation from another form of expression. But it is a young art, and people like Vigo and Mayer, who could conceive things in screen terms only, and without reference elsewhere, are still rare. Moreover, there is no reason why Shakespeare should not be translated—I would almost prefer to say transmuted—to the screen so that all his poetry, all his drama, remain intact. Indeed, I discovered the other day when re-reading the Poetics, that Aristotle and Mr Samuel Goldwyn would find themselves in almost complete agreement on the former's thesis that 'Every tragedy . . . must have six parts, which parts determine its quality—namely, plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle, song'. I said 'almost' because the fourth quality might give Mr Goldwyn a moment's pause.

However that may be, I think we can all agree that the problem before the film-maker is to strike a balance between the form of Shakespeare's work and the elaborate possibilities inherent in the film medium.

It is agreed that just because Shakespeare often wrote in images which the stage could not physically reproduce it is not necessary for the film, which *could* reproduce these images, to do so. What then are the positive contributions it can make?

Speaking first on a severely practical level, it can provide the movement and pageantry which Shakespeare himself demands. Two stage direc-

ons taken at random will explain this point. 'hey are both from 'Coriolanus'.

The first: 'They all shout and wave their words; take him up in their arms, and cast up heir caps'.

The second: 'Titus Lartius, having set a guard pon Corioli, going with drum and trumpet toard Cominius and Caius Marcius enters with a cutenant, a party of soldiers, and a scout.'

Now it is perfectly true that you can get away ith this sort of thing lavishly or shabbily—ccording to resources—in the theatre. But there is no doubt whatever that the scenes in question rould benefit dramatically, and with Shakeseare's full approval, if they were presented with the realism, and the scale of action, which can be o easily and vividly achieved on the screen.

Pursuing this thought a little further, let us ake Macbeth, Act V, from Scene II onwards. n 279 lines the scene changes five times (one cene is only ten lines long), and the action inolves the approach of the English army to Dunsinane, the death of Lady Macbeth, and the inal issue between the two armies and between Aacbeth and Macduff. This act is always the bugbear of the stage producer—but gives the film roducer a wonderful opportunity to keep the low of action going, and to present it on a scale which, because convincing, would throw the rama of Macbeth's fall into proper relief. One hight even be bold enough to say that only on he cinema screen would it be possible to carry ut the intention of Act V of Macbeth. And I hink similar examples will readily occur to all

Hitherto there has not been enough filming of hakespeare to provide sufficient experimental naterial by which theory and practice can be, as he examination papers say, compared and ontrasted.

As far as I know, the only Shakespeare plays be filmed have been these: The Taming of the hrew—a very early talkie, with Mary Pickford nd Douglas Fairbanks. This I only recollect ather vaguely, but I remember enjoying it very nuch. And in any case The Shrew, with The Aerry Wives of Windsor, is likely, by its own ature, to be a wholly unrepresentative example. hen there was A Midsummer Night's Dream, roduced by Max Reinhardt. Although it had nany faults—not least its preoccupation with all he trickeries of film technique for the fairies, had some lovely things in it—including a very oung Mickey Rooney as Puck, played, not as so ften on the stage as an extra-effeminate Peter an, but as an earthy, dirty urchin. Then again here was the English production of As You Like t, with Elizabeth Bergner, of which one can only ay, with Regan, 'Good sir, no more; these are ansightly tricks'. There was Romeo and Juliet, vith Norma Shearer and Leslie Howard, drownd in an inconceivable elaboration and emproidery of crowds and supersettings. Of this I emember as good only John Barrymore's Mercutio—and he played it as a straight stage part with no concessions to camera.

And finally, Laurence Olivier's production of *Henry V*.

This remarkable work does in itself provide a sermon on the filming of Shakespeare. This film was most carefully thought out—obviously in fiew of the challenge of the Prologue:

'can this cockpit hold
The vasty fields of France? or may we cram
Within this wooden O the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt?'
Shakespeare's answer was to ask his audience

to use their imagination—and that, with his help, is not always too difficult—as witness the great Prologue to Act III describing the English fleet holding course for Harfleur.

Now Olivier and his colleagues realized that there must be a middle course between the limits of the stage of Shakespeare's day and the almost limitless powers of the film camera. They saw, too, that the play could be translated to the screen through achieving a perfect symmetry of shape in space and time—rather like a water lily which opens at dawn and at evening closes 'all its sweetness up'. So they began and ended the film by reconstructing a performance of the play in the Elizabethan theatre. In between they modulated, as it were, from a stylized approach into absolute realism—the night before Agincourt and the battle itself—and then back, through stylization, to the theatre.

There is no time to analyse further the many great qualities, and the faults (not a few) of this remarkable film. But I think that it is a revelation of what can be done in screening Shakespeare by artists of intelligence and integrity. But note that it does not provide a cast-iron formula. The shape and style adopted for Henry V arose from the internal qualities of the play itself. They should not, necessarily, be imposed on other Shakespeare films-each play must be recreated in screen terms according to its own special soul, What the film of Henry V has proved is that this can be done to the benefit, and not the detriment, of Shakespeare's supreme art, Olivier's new venture—a film of Hamlet—is of the bravest—an Everest climb after a trial scramble up Snowdon. But of that, no more until it is shown.

To sum up—the essential problem of filming Shakespeare is to use the *special* qualities of the film medium to point the *essential* qualities of Shakespeare's poetry and Shakespeare's sense of theatre. His own qualities being universal, it is the film-maker's job to control and limit the more obvious possibilities of the medium in order that the real stuff of Shakespeare is not confused or smothered by the elaborate, the spectacular, the finicky, or the falsely pretentious. It is his job, too, to try, in interpreting Shakespeare to cinema audiences, to match his exuberant imagination in kind.

Here are some tentative examples—merely designed to indicate how the special, the unique medium of cinema can be legitimately used to enhance and not to hinder Shakespeare's work.

First—the speech I have already referred to the description of Cleopatra's barge. Here the problem, in film terms, is for the picture to enhance the descriptive poetry of the sound track. We have already suggested that to film what is described would be ludicrous. Other than that there are two possibilities. The first would involve an absolutely static and continuous shot of Enobarbus speaking the lines. His gestures would be cut to a minimum, and the effect would be obtained by the beauty of his voice (and no background music please) and by the power of his eyes and his facial expression. The second method would be the method of abstraction. That is, one would evolve shapes in motion which would match, rather than illustrate the words, and which, perhaps, would help to distil the magic of the words. (I assume, of course, that the film would be in colour.) Let Enobarbus start his speech with the camera trained on him. But almost immediately it would move away on to some object of ornament. The scene, we must remember, is a room in Lepidus's house, and

it may be presumed to be richly furnished. As the camera reaches this object a piece of rich material, or a flagon, or something of the sort, the focus would be altered so that it became a coloured blur—a shape and no more. Then, item by item of Enobarbus's description, the camera, always moving, would weave patterns—relevant in an abstract, not a factual way, to what was being spoken of, out of the blurred, soft outlines of the furnishings of the room. Well, it might work, it might not. Unless it is one day done we shall never know.

Two more ideas—both from Macbeth: First the representation of the witches. I take Act I, Scene I. Fade in. A desert place. A thunderstorm raging on a bleak moor. Rain lashing across the grey tussocks of grass. A sky racing with clouds. And what are those—are they three thorn trees swaying and bending in the wind? Or three weird sisters dancing fantastically in the storm? The latter perhaps-for out of the screech of the wind comes the screech of voices-and now they are turning widdershins or is it that we are moving (with the camera) around them? Perhaps we shall never be certain but there is no time to think further, for with a final clap of thunder everything clears and we are in rain-washed windy sunlight outside Duncan's tent, and the story is beginning . . .

Second: Act V, Scene V. A vast stone hall in the castle of Dunsinane. Seyton has just told Macbeth: 'The Queen, my Lord, is dead'. Macbeth sits down slowly—on a stool near the huge fireplace. The camera is close to him, looking down on him from a little above him. He begins to speak in a low voice—'She should have died hereafter . . .' and so on. When he gets to 'Tomorrow and tomorrow' the camera starts to move slowly and steadily backwards and upwards, though the sound of his voice remains at constant volume, and by the time he comes to 'told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing', he is a tiny figure, seen from a great height, alone in the vast cavern of his castle. Thus, I think, we can point the universality of his speech by a withdrawal, rather than by a searching out in close-up of the expression on his face, Then—as he says 'signifying nothing', a second tiny figure appears running across the great hall. It is the Messenger. At this moment the camera dives down again with inconceivable rapidity, so that by the time he is kneeling at Macbeth's feet we are close to both of them, can see the sweat on the Messenger's face, the quick rise and fall of his breast, can hear his breathless words-we are back in the world of grim action—so that when Macbeth strikes him it is like a blow in our own

These examples I have given are perhaps unfair—they are extracts from films of Shakespeare, and not plans for entire productions of his work.

Much has been left unsaid in this article. No mention, for instance, of the British Council films of excerpts from Shakespeare's plays, which have been specially designed for students overseas. Nor of the academic possibilities—of the idea of filming performances of all the plays in the most exact possible replica of the theatres of Shakespeare's day. This enormous scheme would be designed, of course, for the Shakespeare addict, not just for the general public, though many of the plays might serve both purposes, if we remember how vividly the camera could reveal the close, intimate relation between player and audience in Shakespeare's day,

#### Edgar Anstey on the

### CZECHOSLOVAK FILM FESTIVAL

#### This article consists of excerpts from a recent BBC Broadcast

IN ALL my film-viewing in Prague 1 have seen only one film which seemed unsuitable for export. My own opinion—for what it's worth—is that the average level of Czechoslovak feature film production is certainly not below that of Britain or America, and is superior to such Soviet work as we have been able to see lately. Now this I recognize is a bold claim. It doesn't mean that Czechoslovak films yet include a great work of genius. What it does mean is that their total product includes little or none of the banal, third-rate nonsense which still forms an appreciable part of American and British output.

During the course of the Festival British cinema-goers have been able to see Warriors of Faith, Stolen Frontier, Men without Wings, The Warning, The Strike, Dead among the Living, and The Violin and the Dream, together with shorts ranging from the delightfully eerie mystical legend Animals and Brigands to the fine dignity of Church of St George—a documentary of ecclesiastical architecture full of the national spirit of Czechoslovakia.

#### **General Conclusion**

It is not my place here to review these films in detail. But I do want to draw certain general conclusions as to overall content and style and I think the best way to do this is to tell you about the most memorable thing that happened to me during my last visit to Czechoslovakia. We had been invited to a small town called Duba, which had been chosen for the première of Warriors of Faith because it was from here that Rohac, the hero of the film came five hundred years ago. A party went from Prague for the occasion, led by Mr Kopecky, Minister of Information. One part of the ceremony was the re-naming of a street in honour of the film and, after the speeches had been made, the official party moved off through the crowds towards the hotel for the rest of the proceedings. Now the Minister of Information is a native of this district, and it was not long before he had been halted by shouts of greeting from men and women who once had been his schoolfellows. They started to ask him questions about the state of the world and the hope of peace. He began to answer them-slowly and carefully at first—in terms which I recognized, when they were translated by a neighbour, as being homely and yet shrewd and realistic. The discussion—on a level of man to man equality with no obsequiousness or timid deferencewent on and became more and more complicated, and more and more lively and stimulating. It began there in the street and went on during most of the rest of the day. From time to time, Mr Kopecky would disappear from the formalities and later would be found at the centre of a knot of eager, inquiring citizens of Duba.

Here was in fact a Minister of Information taking advantage of a fleeting opportunity to do his job, not through his staff, or through the Press, or through the radio, but directly with the people of whom he was a leader and yet a servant. It was, as I said, a memorable experience.

#### Democratic Realism

But what has this to do with Czechoslovak films? The answer I think is that the average

Czechoslovak film demonstrates a particular kind of democratic realism. Their films are conspicuously free from social or indeed intellectual distinction between groups and levels of people. They really seem to begin with the assumption that all men are equal. Then, as to realism. Even in Warriors of Faith where some people have found the plot over-complicated and difficult to follow, few of you will quarrel with the background of medieval town and castle and with the costumes or decoration. Certainly in the films of war and occupation like Stolen Frontier and Men without Wings, the settings are documentary in manner. For example, the industrial sequences of Men without Wings were shot in a real factory and not in the studio. Perhaps without immodesty, we may claim to find signs here of British influence, probably transmitted by Czechoslovak film-makers who worked here during the war.

Another quality of Czechoslovak films is the readiness of characters to discuss in serious adult terms the underlying political or philosophical implications of their story. The raising of such serious issues in the dialogue is not regarded with the horror that it would arouse in many British and American film distributors and exhibitors. Mind you this sometimes lets in a bit of direct propaganda—generally, and naturally enough perhaps in this nationalized industry, against the Germans and the Hungarians. But the propaganda is never over-obtrusive.

Now, since we've got to it, what about nationalization? Whatever the dangers of propaganda and censorship which it may bring. nationalization does mean that the making and distributing of films is not merely a matter of commercial relationships between different financial groups each concerned with its own section of the industry; instead the nationalized industry can concentrate as a whole on providing a public service. And I particularly noticed amongst our visitors that whilst there was a great deal of discussion about what is a good film and what isn't. the question of what the public wanted-of boxoffice-was never once raised. For the very simple reason that the film-makers did not see themselves as being a different kind of person from the people who go to the cinema. If a film was good-and they meant good as art and entertainment, not as propaganda—then the public would like it. And that is a theory which no one has yet succeeded in disproving-at any rate to me (provided always of course that public judgment is not deliberately unbalanced in advance, as it so frequently is here, by enormously expensive publicity campaigns designed to persuade the public that a film known by its makers to be bad, is in fact good).

I should like to speak briefly about other aspects of the Festival besides the showing of films. And I am not referring to the hospitality provided by the Foreign Office, the Rank organization and other film industry bodies. Of perhaps more importance have been lectures given by people like Mr Nezval, the leading poet of Czechoslovakia, on 'Poetry in the Film', by Mr Brichta on 'The History of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Education on 'The Scientific Film', and by

Mr Kolda on 'The International Distribution of Films'. Some of these lectures have been given for the public, some for specialized groups in the British film industry. But each of them has represented a valuable exchange of experience. Then the documentary makers of both countries have got together to plan an agreement for the exchange of films and facilities. And the critics to examine common problems of critical standards, and resistance to unfair influence, be it political or commercial.

From the British side we have heard Mr George Tomlinson, Minister of Education, speak on the importance of the documentary film in the international field. Mr Herbert Morrison has wittily drawn attention to the great moderation the Labour Government is showing in-as yetproposing no nationalization for the British film industry. Mr Fielinger, speaking for Czechoslovakia, has reminded us in moving terms of the close bonds built up both on the personal and the national level between our two countries during the war period. Indeed one has not, I think, been over-optimistic in feeling that there does exist on both sides a deep determination that this cultural exchange shall be the first of many-exemplified best perhaps by the presence of a group of three British Cabinet Ministers at two of the Festival's ceremonies

#### Results

What does this Festival mean for the man and woman in the street (or in the cinema)? To begin with, it's surely an advantage that those people responsible for art and the communication of ideas in all countries, should meet to see whether in their chosen calling they may not find a common interest and a common aim which have escaped the statesmen and the politicians. And for cinema audiences, the Festival surely can be regarded as a step in the direction of a wider and fairer exchange of films with foreign countries. It's no coincidence that a most encouraging agreement for the distribution of British films in Czechoslovakia should have been concluded during the period of the Festival. Let us hope that those cinema-goers who have seen and enjoyed the Czechoslovak films at the New Gallery, the Glasgow Cosmo and other cinemas will do what they can, individually and through any organizations they belong to, to encourage the distribution of the films on a normal commercial basis. Foreign dialogue undoubtedly is a handicap. even with sub-titles, but this can be more than balanced by the atmosphere and feeling of a foreign country which its films carry. Beyond their story, their plot, there is a background, an atmosphere, a philosophy, if you like, by which a country can communicate its qualities and characteristics to the world more effectively than through any other medium. It may do so honestly or dishonestly, and this must be taken care of by the film-makers. But if they do an honest joband most of them wish to do nothing else-and it the public insists on seeing their work, then the work of the film-maker in all countries may well prove to be the most important means we have of breaking down the international barriers which grow out of ignorance and suspicion.

### HISTORY ON FILM

#### By Peter Baylis

THE Pathé Company have produced a newsreel twice a week since the early years of the century and a cinemagazine once a week since the early twenties. And each week from home and overseas, the News and the Pictorial gather in some 8,000 feet of film. After their all-too-brief tour of the cinema circuits, the reels and the mass of unused material are transferred to the Library. Occasionally, odd sections of film are dusted off to be incorporated in a biography of a departed personality, and at the close of each year the News Editors dig down for bits for their review of the past 12 months. The remainder of the film shot, in all probability, never again sees the light of the projector arc. Here, then, is material unlimited. From it films can be compiled on every possible subject-politics, sport, aviation, scientific progress, everything from international affairs since World War I, to 40 years of football.

The first film we put in production was a 4-reel compilation for theatrical distribution. One of the most popular series of feature broadcasts has been the Scrap Book programmes written by Leslie Baily. We considered that if, in some way, we could combine the two techniques, radio and film, we might be able to achieve an illusion of a past era which would surpass in nostalgia anything which has yet reached the screen. We called in Leslie Baily who enthused over the idea. The main question was—just how far back should we go. It had to be far enough back to provide colourful contrast with the present day, and yet not so far back that the better part of the cinema audience could not enjoy a fair modicum of nostalgia. Finally, we decided on 1922-just a quarter of a century ago—a year strong enough in post-war influence to invite interesting and significant comparison with 1947. And it so happened that 1922 was chock-full of exactly what we wanted; history and nostalgia unlimited. It was a year of international unrest, the fall of a British government, civil war in Ireland, the first days of the BBC, Suzanne Lenglen and Jack Hobbs, Bonar Law and Bottomley, Sarah Bernhardt and Stanley Lupino, 'normalcy' and night-clubs, Felix the Cat and 'Beaver!'

So, step by step, Scrap Book for 1922 is coming together. It is a job calling for prolonged research and infinite patience, but we are convinced that something different will be the result.

So much for our attempts to slip into the now fairly distant past; but what of the time that is only now slipping into history?

We had in mind a film record, in topicality somewhere between a newsreel and a March of Time, which would present the events of a given period with some semblance of explanation. Because of the time which must inevitably elapse during production, our period had to be of some considerable duration. So we cut our cloth to a one reel quarterly, which would be entitled Summing Up. With one eye on the schools, we chose as our subject international affairs. This was to include, also, those events which can be considered as having distinct international significance as, for example, the international search for a lost Dakota in the Alps, or, an American coal strike affecting production vital to world reconstruction. The whole was to be an international review which would be a solid plug for world unity. The film's immediate use was to provide background and atmosphere for teen-age lessons on current affairs. Its long-term use would be as a permanent historical record.

The material with which we had to work had very distinct limitations. Often coverage consisted of only a handful of shots and frequently these shots were cut extremely short. A style of commentary and presentation had therefore to be adopted, which would tell the story in the simplest possible terms. The commentary could not expand or expound at will-it had to be confined to exceedingly short bursts. Opticals we shunned, because, as we were working on dupes, there would have been an unbearable loss of quality. To punctuate the film and to provide breathing spaces, we adopted the March of Time style of continuity titles (which, on reflection, seemed to be used by March of Time for exactly the same reasons!)

When the first two editions of Summing Up reached the schools, complete with teaching notes, we invited criticism. We certainly got it. Sequences were too short, commentaries were either too newsy or too emotional, we linked events on film which had no real link in real life, unity.

and so on, and so on. But, by and large, the reception has been encouraging. We would like to extend the use of Summing Up as far into the nontheatrical field as possible, and, maybe, into the theatrical field. Here, however, arise questions of release and topicality. When does delayed news material cease to be out-of-date news and become an historical record?

In the dramatic form of presentation adopted by Summing Up, I admit to indulgence in a pet theory with regard to instruction by film. I consider that instruction on history and current affairs can best be achieved by dramatization; that by using forceful commentary, appropriate music and polished editing, we can show children and students that the events taking place around us are as dramatic and as exciting as anything that Hollywood can contrive. We wanted to impress upon them that Trieste is not just a spot on a map, a name to be bandled about over conference tables, but is a living community of men, women and children. We wanted to show them that an atom blast at Bikini, a conference in Moscow, a civil war in China and a strike in Balham were all part of one great story-the story of man's fight for existence and world

### AUDIENCE REACTIONS IN SCHOOLS

THREE new Road Safety films for children, reviewed elsewhere in this issue, have just been released by Petroleum Films Bureau. They aim to be something more than the usual traffic-light and careful-crossing type of film, but both their makers and the distributors regard them as something in the nature of an experiment albeit an experiment thought out with care and a sense of responsibility. They endeavour to use the child's love of fantasy to teach him good roadbehaviour-to teach him more through his imagination and his love of make-believe than by dinning a concrete idea into his head until it loses

Adults vary greatly in their reactions to these films-some think they are too fantastic; others that they are not fantastic enough. Some think they will be above the heads of children; others that they talk down too much. But the important thing is-how do children react? They have been made for children and what matters is whether they influence their behaviour in the desired way.

The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations was called in, and the suggestion made that an audience reaction test should be carried out amongst some schoolchildren. The Local Education Authorities in Harrow were very co-operative and made arrangements for two of their schools to receive a team of investigators.

As Playing in the Road was not finished at the time, only Puddle Muddle Riddle (for the seven and eight year olds) and The Ballad of the Battered Bicycle (nine and ten year olds) were tried out. The classes, of about forty children and providing different age groups, were split into four sections of ten children each. Section A did free drawing for twenty minutes, then saw the film, then drew again for another twenty minutes. It was hoped to find something of the content of the films being brought out in the second lot of drawings. These pictures were all stored, with the rest of the test material, to be examined later.

Section B, with two observers, did an oral story completion. One observer started them on a story; then each child in turn added bits to the story as he or she liked. This observer kept the ball rolling and made general notes on the behaviour of the group. The other observer had the job of taking down everything which was said by all the children in detail. After twenty minutes the story was left in mid air while the film was shown and then another story was started which had some parallel meaning to that of the film. Again, every word and action, as far as possible, was noted down.

Section C in the three older age groups did a written story completion both before and after the film. These stories were taken away and examined later. (In the case of the seven year olds Section C did the same as Section B.)

Section D was the play group. They went out of doors with one observer to direct the play and another two to do all the writing of the conversations and general actions of the group. It was suggested to the children that they should make up a road game and play at crossing and being buses and cars. After they had seen the film it was suggested to them that they might like to act it out and to put in anything which they felt might improve the film. Again, everything they did or said was noted down.

Each film was shown to the four sections at the same time that is, to the seven year olds Sections A, B, C, and D, and so on through all the age groups. As the schools were large ones it was possible to have an 'average' class in each age to avoid either the very bright children or the dullards. During each showing of the films all the observers were on the alert to note down the laughs, the bits which held the attention best, the bits which were obviously boring and the bits which seemed to be beyond the children and during which they started to fidget.

The next day every child who had seen either of the films was asked to write an essay on the film and these essays were collected by the teachers and sent on to the Institute to add to the huge piles of drawings, stories and notes which were already assembled there for interpretation

The results will take some while to work out, and until that is done it is of course impossible to draw any well-founded conclusion.

### NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Chasing the Blues. DATA Films for the Cotton Board. *Music*: Jack Parnell's Quartet. *Dancers*: Alan Baker, Donald Britten. *Optical Superimposition*: Studio Film Laboratories. *Distribution*: T and Non-T in Lancashire. 6 minutes.

Whenever films are made to propagate policies there arises the difficulty of flushing the shy living things that lurk in the undergrowth of official and semi-official phraseology. Typewriters chatter through the Hampstead night as directors and script-writers devise methods of making columns of statistics walk and talk, or of imparting attractive flesh-tints to a stack of white papers. When their devices are successful, which is not always by any means, it is an occasion for warm congratulation.

Chasing the Blues undertakes the task of encouraging cotton-mill managers to pay more attention to the welfare and comfort of their workers, and giving them a few ideas on how to go about it. The DATA technicians have avoided ponderous exhortations and wordy argument. Instead they have produced a kind of film ballet which makes its points almost entirely in music and movement. The technique derives, partly at any rate, from Len Lye's abstract film posters of the 1930s, and it fulfils its purpose to admiration. Experiments of this kind are as welcome as they are rare, and it is to be hoped that both sponsors and producers will explore further the land of fantasy. They will find it an invaluable base in their war against the Great Ho-Hum.

Puddle Muddle Riddle. Seven League for PFB. Distribution: PFB. 12 mins.

Playing in the Road. Public Relationship Films for PFB. *Distribution*: PFB. 12 mins.

The Ballad of the Battered Bicyele. Seven League for PFB. *Distribution*: PFB. 8 mins.

In this country the production of entertainment films for children is still in its infancy and little is yet known about the effectiveness of this medium for conveying ideas. The Petroleum Films Bureau is therefore to be congratulated upon having sponsored a series of experimental story films on road safety, each having been made for a particular age group.

It is not easy for an adult to appraise films made for children. They must clearly be of a slower tempo than those for adults, and are therefore liable to seem boring to us. The humour must be broad and rather obvious, and not of the type to which we are used to responding. The camera must move quietly and deliberately, making its points explicitly rather than by reference to symbols, significant close-ups, cross-cutting, ctc. The children and grown-ups must appear as they do to children. But having said that we have said very little, and the only real test of such films is the influence they have on behaviour. We understand that the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations is undertaking some research on children's reactions to these films. This should yield some extremely interesting results.

Of these three films, the least successful was the onc designed for the youngest children, *Playing in the Road*. From the adult point of view it is a delightful film—well shot and neatly edited, amusing and interesting. But it is very doubtful

whether small children would follow much of it. It moves very quickly, the dialogue is sophisticated and spoken rapidly, and the points are emphasized too subtly. The most suitable film is the one for children of over 10 years, *The Ballad of the Battered Bicycle*. The commentary is in the style of Stanley Holloway, who speaks it. It is the tale of a boy who, breaking every rule of the road, rides his bike to its death. It is a clear and simple story, straightforwardly told, and should appeal to the juvenile road-hog.

Puddle Muddle Riddle is difficult to assess, since its humour is not intended to appeal to grown-ups and it depends on humour to make its point. It is the story of Puddle Muddle, where there were no traffic rules, and of the various types of rules devised by the grotesque Town Council when the chaos became unbearable. Eventually some sensible people step in and work out the rules we use today, and they appeal to the children to co-operate in carrying them out. There seems every reason to believe that the main point will get over to the children, even if they do not follow the transition from the Puddle Muddlians to the sensible folk who put everything right.

Whatever their result, the making of these films was a step forward. We want more of every type of film for children, but we especially want more research and experiment into the entertainment film for juveniles. Is it asking too much for the Ministry of Education to give some consideration to this question alongside its work on educational films?

A Power in the Land. World Wide for Electrical Trades Union. *Producer*: Ralph Bond. *Director*: Terry Bishop. *Camera*: Arthur Graham. *Distribution*: Full-theatrical, GFD, 40 mins.

This film has been made in two versions, a three reeler for the theatres, with an extra reel to be added for showing throughout the trade union movement. The main body of the film deals with the uses of electricity. Through the membership index of a trade union office we are introduced to the work that has to be done in electrical supply undertakings, in factories making electrical fittings, in steelworks where the machinery is electrically controlled, on board ship, etc. Before our eyes pass electric irons and cookers, generators and scientific timing machines, X-ray apparatus, an encephalograph, and finally a cyclotron (with a brief introduction to atom-splitting). The commentator works up to a high-sounding peroration on all these marvels of electricity, to be interrupted by an ordinary electrician doing his everyday job repairing somebody else's wireless set, with a timely 'A fat lot of use you'd be without me'. It is a very necessary reminder. The ETU has a couple of hundred thousand members; on their work and skill depends the supply of many services we take for granted.

The extra reel gives a brief description of the ETU, its organization as a trade union, how it functions, and the wide range of activities it is concerned with. It seems a pity that this should be the section which is omitted from the theatrical version. It is the general public, rather than the trade union movement, that needs to be informed of these things, particularly as the film does a

good job of explaining union organization.

The film is competently made, though rather slow-moving at times. One could have wished, in the theatrical version, for more emphasis on people, on the electricians themselves. The fact that the film is to get theatrical distribution is particularly important. It will be the first time a trade union viewpoint about a major industry will be presented on the cinema screens of this country.

Out of the Ruins. Canadian National Film Board for UNRRA. *Distribution*: N-T. CFL. 30 mins. This film made in 1945 tells the story of the relief work undertaken immediately following the liberation of Greece. Today it might well be written off as out of date, were it not for the fact that its implications are profoundly topical.

As its title suggests, *Out of the Ruins* provides a picture of the devastation of Greece and of the pitiful situation of its population at the time of the liberation. Such scenes are still salutary, even after our own wartime experiences and the discomforts of the recent fuel crisis. The work of UNRRA makes an inspiring theme, with its welcome by the ordinary people, its preoccupation with providing the homely but important things of life (such as mules), and its concern to draw the Greek people fully into the work of reconstruction and replanning.

The director has made the most of the opportunities provided. The Greek peasants are brought close to us and we are impressed by their courage and their simple dignity. The beauties of the countryside—surely a sore temptation to the cameraman—have been utilized without artiness or artificiality. There is a very effective and moving sequence depicting the Resistance in symbolic terms. As it stands, this film is a fitting tribute to all that was best in UNRRA and to the ideals of disinterested relief which have received such setbacks since its premature demise.

But Greece is the centre of world political battles and is torn by civil war. Any good film must therefore be expected to reflect in some way the underlying reasons for this. Within the limits set by the subject *Out of the Ruins* does this. It shows for example, the contrast between the standard of living of the rich and of the poor, the expensive shops crammed with luxury foods while the mass of the people live on, or over, the starvation line. It shows the demands for democracy of the ordinary people. It shows foreign troops on patrol in the heart of Athens. We can draw our own conclusions from these facts.

The real topicality of this film lies, however, in what it does not show. When it was shot it was apparently still possible to be optimistic about the future of Greece. The film breathes confidence about the reconstruction of the country, about the participation of the common people in this work, and about the re-establishment of the cultural and democratic heritage of Greece. Yet, two years later, with UNRRA at an end, civil war raging, and thousands of the ordinary folk exiled, imprisoned or seeking sanctuary in the mountains, one can only feel shaken and shamed by the frustration of all the ideals and plans so enthusiastically portrayed in the film. The Canadian Film Board have turned out a good film, but they have done more than that. Perhaps inadvertently they have challenged the consciences of the freedom loving peoples of the

Very Dangerous. Sixteen to Twenty-six. Produced by the National Film Board of Canada and Crawley Studios for the Division of VD Control, Department of National Health and Welfare. Each 2 reels. 16 mm. colour-sound. Distribution: Canadian National Film Board.

These two colour films from Canada are a useful addition to existing films on venereal disease. Using the device of a lecture by a doctor, each film shows the cause, symptoms, method of transmission and cure of gonorrhoea and syphilis; Sixteen to Twenty-six dealing with the diseases in women, Very Dangerous in men. Given this method of presentation little fault can be found with either film. Both are straightforward competent productions, although some of the diagram work, particularly that showing the incidence of VD compared with other common diseases, could be improved upon; and the colour in places is unnaturally lurid.

From a propaganda point of view both films present the same combination of medical fact and moral exhortation, which is followed by VD publicity in this country. Whether this line will ever achieve any reduction in the incidence of the diseases is too complicated a question to be discussed here: at the same time it must be said that surely the time has now come for an approach to the subject from a more positive point of view. The wartime increase of VD, which still continues, is only one example of a complex breakdown of the social system, a breakdown which shows itself in increasing restlessness and dissatisfaction with work, in a rise of juvenile delinquency and armed robbery, in an erratic birth rate and a phenomenal rise in the number of divorces. Rooted in sociology there is a major task of film making to be undertaken, which will tackle the problems of VD constructively against the whole background of individual and family life in the modern world. Until that time, lecturers in Health Education will find these two films of considerable, if limited, value,

New Faces Come Back. *Produced* by RCAF Film Unit and National Film Board. 28 mins.

There is one point about this film for which every doctor will be grateful to the producers: that in a subject full of potential 'drama', they have remained calm and dispassionate. For they had a difficult job to do, and the temptation must have been great. Briefly the idea behind the film was to enlist the sympathy and understanding of people in Canada, far from the reality of bombs and their consequences, for those who returned from the war maimed and disfigured.

The film tells how a young Canadian flight engineer, badly burned in a plane crash, is sent to the Plastic Surgery Centre at East Grinstead, for treatment. Here he gets his 'new face'. The course of his recovery is followed and we see how with the help of hospital staff and local friends he gradually returns to a normal attitude to life. In its earlier part the film moves fast. Although in places the continuity wavers, there are moments of skilled film craft which are a pleasure to watch. In the latter part, however, the story breaks down. More than self-consciousness, the haunting fear of these men is sexual failure; the girl's casual refusal to dance, although it symbolizes this fear, does not become a reality. The film fails to convince that Jim would have taken this incident so much to heart, particularly as he does not seem to lack for other outside friends. Even less are we convinced by his subsequent reactions. Sublimation, symbolized by an interest in music, again appears too simple for reality. The film here never quite makes up its mind what it is trying to get over; eventually it gives up the struggle, Jim recovers his balance and goes happily home, leaving us with the theme that the rest is up to the people there.

The superficiality of the part dealing with the ups and downs of readjustment is a pity, because it inevitably nullifies the permanent value of the film. The problems of psychological adjustment after injury are complex and deep. They cannot be treated in a film which is obviously looking over its shoulder at the theatrical distributors. As events proved, even in this form, it was inacceptable to the theatres, and an opportunity for making a real study of the problem, which would have a permanent value, has been lost. Nevertheless this is a competent film, which has a value for general audiences as an introduction to some of the problems of rehabilitation.

Peniciltin in Medical Practice. Realist for COI and Ministry of Health. *Producer*: John Taylor. *Director*, J. Massey. *Camera*: Ronald Gardner. *Distribution*: CFL. 35 mins.

Technical films for medical audiences are still all too rare, it is therefore the more regrettable to have to record this long awaited film a disappointment. Undoubtedly its value would have been much greater if it could have been released before Penicillin was generally available. Today when all doctors have had experience of its use, much of the point has been lost. Even so it is difficult to understand what it was hoped to achieve with the film in this form.

In theory the shape is sound. From a beautiful opening shot of the mould in growth, the film reviews in succession the properties of penicillin, including the agents by which it is inactivated, shows the form and methods of administration and the limitations of use. The latter part shows some of the principal applications of penicillin to medicine, surgery, ophthalmology, venereal and skin infections. This is no superficial treatment, yet at the end we have learned little and will remember less.

The fact is that this is one of those omnibus films that confuse the mind with a mass of material and give no time for reflection and absorption; yet at the same time in covering too much, leaves much unanswered. This is the more annoying because much of the detail is concerned with hospital treatment and surgical techniques, which are unnecessary and which could have been omitted to allow the inclusion of the simpler practical information and guidance for use needed by the general practitioner in his daily work. Of many omissions, the most serious is a lack of stress on the dangers of underdosage. Undoubtedly there is much here that is useful the sequence showing continuous intramuscular drip, for example, is excellent, and tips, like the inclusion of Novocaine to minimize the pain of injection, invaluable—but these tend to get lost in the remaining material. The film unit have been badly advised. This was a subject ealling for a fundamental analysis of aim and purpose, and should clearly have been dealt with in a series of

On the technical side the film is in general much below the standard we expect from this unit. While many of the difficulties are inherent in present day 16 mm. colour production, a slower tempo through a more liberal use of cut aways and camera movement would have helped the method of presentation.

Modern Guide to Heatth. By Halas and Batchelor for COt and Ministry of Itealth. Producer and Director: John Halas. Script: Joy Batchelor. Camera: Percy Wright. Distribution 1 and Non-T CFL. 10 mins.

A guide to *Health*: A tall order in ten minutes. Forget the title; here are some first-rate tips on good posture, fresh air and exercise, sensible clothing and sound sleep, presented in a simple style which contrives to be both instructional and entertaining. Elementary, but none the worse for that. We have had too many overstuffed films. Cartoon technique proved its value for health education in the armed forces during the war. In a world engaged on forgetting all wartime lessons this film is an encouragement. But why is it not labelled No 1? A planned series is needed.

Scabies, 1946. Merlin for Ministry of Health. *Direction:* Robin Carruthers. *Production:* Michael Hankinson. *Camera*: H. N. Edwell. *Distribution:* CFL. 34 mins.

This re-edited version of the Scabies film made for medical audiences in 1943 is a considerable improvement on the original. With the removal of the unconvincing sync dialogue sequences, and the insertion of a new section showing the relative merits of various sarcopticides, the film now presents a completely satisfying account of scabies infestation. Now for a film on the louse, please.

Food Manufacture, Production: World Wide for Army Kinema Corporation. Producer: James Carr. Director: Graham Cutts. Camera: Ronnie Anscombe. Story: Ted Willis. Distribution: CFL and all services. 27 mins.

This is one of a series of films portraying life in various key British industries for the guidance of members of the forces returning to civilian jobs. The food industry bristles with difficulties from the point of view of the film maker. It is a medley of craft processes, and machine minding, poorly organized and indifferently paid. Despite its social usefulness it is not an industry which is likely to attract the ambitious or enterprising worker.

World Wide have been well advised to use a severely factual approach—and it was good to hear the commentator facing up to realities. He explained frequently that prospects of promotion were poor and that in certain sections of the industry there was little opportunity of learning a trade. He was brutally frank about the low level of wages and the monotony of much of the work, but this is all as it should be in a film which sets out to present a true picture of an industry.

In this series there have been a dozen or so films depicting various industries where labour is required. If they are all as painstakingly honest as this one the average chap in the forces should have found them very helpful in choosing his future job. On the other hand, one can imagine his confusion if each film had tried to present its subject as the most alluring and lucrative industry.

This review may give the impression that the film is dull and earnest—on the contrary, it is interesting, lively and amusing, it is well and imaginatively shot, briskly edited and the music is apt and wittily arranged. The film can profitably be shown in adult education, to school-leavers, and to social scientists as well as being of interest to film society audiences.

LE CANARD ENCHAÎNÉ has kindly given us permission to reprint this interesting article on

### MONSIEUR VERDOUX or CHARLIE CHAPLIN versus THE REST

New York—April

I HAVE just been seeing *Monsieur Verdoux*, the new Charlie Chaplin film. Or should I say the new Chaplin film, for the little man with the bowler hat and bamboo cane isn't in it? Instead, there is a new character, a very elegant gentleman with silvery hair. The moustache alone reminds us of the old Charlie.

The story of Monsieur Verdoux—a Comedy of Murders is simple. For 30 years, Verdoux, a humble French bank clerk, has looked after other people's money. One day he gets the sack. The worm turns. Verdoux has an invalid wife and a small son. He must have money. To get it, he commits bigamy with rich women whom he immediately kills off. Posing first as an explorer, then as an Army captain, and finally as an antique dealer, he seduces his female victims with a flowery and passionate eloquence. Don Juan lives again—metempsychosed into Crippen!

And then one day Monsieur Verdoux's house of cards collapses. His invalid wife dies; so does his son. He is hammered on the Stock Exchange, Sick of it all, he throws in his hand, and gives himself up, to justice and the hangman.

Is there any comedy? Yes, of course. There is the scene where he counts the takings from the wives he has killed, wetting his finger and flicking the notes rapidly as bank clerks do, the world over.

There is the scene when he makes desperate efforts to drown one of his wives, and it is she who finally rescues him from a watery grave.

And another, when he makes a passionate avowal of love—with a cup of tea in his hand.

But these moments are rare. There are not many laughs. On the contrary, it is a film of such bitterness and melancholy that it took my breath away.

What have the American critics said?

'We just can't recognize our old friend Charlie.'
'What has happened to the little guy in the bowler hat?'

'Way down, it's the same Charlie, but this time he's really old, grown disillusioned and cynical. No more moonlight and roses. Things have got too tough.'

To which Monsieur Verdoux bitterly replies 'The world is a jungle.'

When Monsieur Verdoux appears before the judge who condemns him to death, he makes a little speech. 'The prosecution has credited me with intelligence. Thank you. For 30 years I used this intelligence of mine for honest ends. And then suddenly, one day, they didn't want it. You call me a criminal? On the contrary, I'm only an amateur. The mass murder of women and children is done scientifically these days.' And he adds mockingly—'See you soon, gentlemen, very soon.'

A reporter who comes to interview him in his cells suggests that 'Crime doesn't pay.' 'Don't you believe it,' says Verdoux, 'a great many criminals become millionaires. I'm just unlucky.'

A priest visits him in prison. 'God have pity on your soul,' he says. Monsieur Verdoux smiles —

'Why not,' he says, 'after all, it belongs to him.'
In this extraordinary film, there is no sweetness or light and no hope. The characters are ugly, greedy, and guarrelsome. The women are fools

greedy and quarrelsome. The women are fools, naïve fools, avaricious fools. The most sympathetic character is Monsieur Verdoux himself, the murderer, the Bluebeard.

As in all Chaplin films, there is a young girl. But this time the young girl is a thief, the mistress of an armaments king. ('That ought to have been my racket,' murmurs Monsieur Verdoux.)

Do you remember the last shot in *Modern Times?* Backlit, Charlie walks down a long road, hand in hand with Paulette Goddard. Monsieur Verdoux walks alone, between two policemen, alone to his death, and it is almost as though he is saying 'At last.'

Do you remember *The Circus*, *The Gold Rush*, and a dozen other films in which Charlie timidly and adoringly makes love to pre-Raphaelite young girls.? Monsieur Verdoux whispers apt clichés to middle-aged women, with an eye on their bank balance.

If this film distressed and saddened me, it is not because of Monsieur Verdoux, who after all is no more than a symbol of our time, a character who amateurishly attempts to compete with the atomic big shots. No, it's not because of him. It is because of Charles Chaplin.

For if ever a film reflected the bitterness and despair of a human spirit, this film does. How blind the American critics are! 'The film is amusing,' they have said, or 'bewildering'. They have uttered their pious hopes that Charlie will be back with his bowler hat in his 'next'. None of them say 'There speaks a man's soul.'

Why is Monsieur Verdoux so lonely, so antisocial, so shatteringly cynical? Because he is Charles Chaplin.

The reason is not far to seck. No matter what American paper you open, for years Chaplin has been the butt of all the bigots, hypocrites, jingoists and nitwits of the entire American continent,

Columnists who can find nothing to say, because they are dead from the neck up, can always attack Chaplin, and throw mud at one of the greatest artists of our time. Chaplin is sensitive, Chaplin is creative, Chaplin will never hunt with the hounds. Down with Chaplin!

'Are you a Communist, Mr Chaplin?' 'What did you do during the war?' 'Why won't you have anything to do with American politics?' 'Why have you never become an American citizen, after having lived here for 30 years?' 'What's your opinion of the USSR?' 'Why? How? When? Where?'

These are only a few of the questions with which he was bombarded at a press conference the other day. He replied: 'I have never become an American because I am not a nationalist. Politics don't interest me. I pay taxes here, despite the fact that 70 per cent of my income comes from abroad. The USSR? In my opinion, the Russians fought bravely during the war. If you think that makes me a Communist, well and good.'

The Press conference went on, becoming more

and more like a court of justice, with Chaplin in the dock. 'Mr Chaplin, in the name of our Catholic comrades, who fell in the war...'

'Mr Chaplin, you have taken our money and yet you refuse to take out nationalization papers

A pack of hounds, and they never let up. And the voice of Monsieur Verdoux echoes—'The world is a jungle.'

Before the conference ended, an intelligent critic with a genuine love for film, asked the following question—'Mr Chaplin, what is your opinion of a country, which, in the name of liberty, expects an artist to account for his beliefs, his private life, the manner in which he conducts his private business, and subjects him to a press campaign which amounts to public blackmail?'

Chaplin looked at him a moment and said two words—'Thank you.'

While all this was going on, and the dogs were baying at his heels, a telegraph boy came in, tired, blasé, chewing gum. He delivered a telegram to somebody and, raising his eyes, suddenly saw, in the middle of the room, a most distinguished and elegant gentleman with white hair. He stared, thunderstruck, then bolted out of the room. And through the closed door we heard his voice, full of disbelief and delight, shouting—'Say, it's Charlie!'

Translated from an article in 'Le Canard Enchaine' dated April 23rd, 1947, and signed 'Donald Ducky.'

#### COI BULLETIN

Monthly Review, No. 5. February 1947. Issued by Information Department, Films Division, COI.

COI Films Division should make a point of circulating their house-magazine to contracting units. This is issue number five, and the first time your reviewer had ever heard of it. Baffled producers, directors and production managers, for whom the letters COI spell only 'financial problems', might have their morale uplifted by the knowledge that enlightened comment of this kind (yes, actually about film, not merely about paperwork and figures) regularly percolates to the darkest recesses of the Central Office. Here in this issue are a review of the 'Factual Film', a report from Paris by Helen de Mouilpied, notes on recent productions, on film literature, on what the studios are doing, and, as a tailpiece, E to G of a 'Glossary of Film Technical Terms and Abbreviations'. Carry on COI! We may not always love you. but this is beyond reproach.

#### CORRECTION BY LETTER

sir: There is a little conspiracy of identical errors in your April-May issue. On p. 88, in the review of the film *Instruments of the Orchestra*, we read of Britten's 'fifteen variations and fugue', and on p. 94 the observation is made again (by another writer?) that 'the film presents 15 variations and a fugue on a Purcell theme.'

Actually the film presents 13 variations, for (1) flutes and piccolo, (2) oboes, (3) clarinets, (4) bassoons, (5) first and second violins, (6) violas, (7) 'cellos, (8) double-basses, (9) harp, (10) horns, (11) trumpets, (12) trombone and bass tuba, and (13) percussion. These are succeeded by the fugue, and preceded by six statements of the theme, for (1) full orchestra, (2) wood-wind, (3) brass, (4) strings, (5) percussion, and (6) full orchestra again.

Yours, etc.,

### WORM'S EYE VIEW OR

### A POSTWAR RECRUIT LOOKS AT DOCUMENTARY By MICHAEL CLARKE

year's issues of DNL, it occurs to me that the documentary movement is inexplicable and confused. When I read about documentary in books and articles, years ago, I learned how vital a medium for public information and social improvement it could be. I realized that our films could, in the crudest terms, be a weapon on the side of truth. I also learned that one of the chief tasks of the documentary worker was to negotiate wider manufacture and better distribution of the product, in order that the broadest social effect might be realized.

What do I find? From the old guard, all too often merely complaints—that the industry is commercialized, that £17 a week is somehow worse than £5, that there is no longer the 'spirit' of the old days. This at a time when more documentaries are commissioned and made than ever before in peacetime.

It isn't sense: but of course it is understandable. For with the wider use of factual films, there have entered the industry many technicians who have no sense of dedication. But it is not their fault that they don't feel like missionaries, nor does it matter if, as often, they are technically very efficient. There isn't any more the feeling of a happy band of pilgrims; the party is too large. Nor is there a large quantity of films with a radical social message being made. (Not that there ever was; but they are the ones that people remember.)

To this extent, the spirit of documentary must have changed; and it is true that the movement is completely disorganized, if indeed it is still a movement at all. I don't think this is because it is too large; for there is still a number of technicians who ally to a love of film the conviction that human health, happiness and values are supremely important, and that our medium can help to fight for their recognition. But many of these people have entered the movement since 1939: they find that documentary is shapeless, and that there is no channel through which their energies, enthusiasms and varied abilities can be canalized.

Most of the complaints about the present, and the esoteric comparisons with 'the old GPO days', come from those whose long service and experience should have led them to keep the movement on its feet. It is these senior technicians of the movement who, I suggest, are responsible for its decline into individualism; it was their task to give leadership, to develop their juniors, or rather so to encourage them that their best talents were matured to the service of documentary. There used to be, one hears, a tradition of this kind; but nowadays most of the people whose task it is are doing other work. Public relations, propagation of the documentary gospels, all the related jobs are vitally important, and must not be obscured. But if they mean that real connection with film-making and filmmakers is abandoned, then those who perform them lose their touch; and leadership is reduced to the sour complaint that things are no longer as they were. It is no coincidence that most sense is usually spoken by those of the first generation who still make films.

However discrete the documentary movement

LOOKING back at a year in the industry and a appears to be, there is still a common factor connecting most of its units. That factor is the technicians who believe actively in the original purposes of the medium. But, with so many people employed, it is no longer possible to preserve and build on that unity by chance meetings in the pub; if we are to fight what Grierson, I believe, called the 'carpet-slipper mentality', we must find something more suitable than the Highlander or the Dog and Duck. There seems to me to be an important place for an organization catering solely for documentary workers; we are in a period of great change, in which we have to adjust our methods and objectives; at the same time, there are numbers of junior technicians who need to be developed and made familiar with the movement in which they work. No existing organization can achieve this. The FDFU, with the chance of a lifetime, nevertheless remains almost solely a producers' body, albeit a valuable one; the ACT has a far wider scope; while Film Centre takes no advantage of its power and opportunity. At the moment, DNL is the only point of contact for documentary workers; and you can't belong to a magazine. Let us therefore, since the dovens of the movement have done nothing to crystallize it, attempt to focus what energies and talents we can assemble in a new body of documentary workers, at once social and professional. Of course, you cannot achieve

miracles simply by forming an organization; but it does provide a basis on which to work

It is at the same time very necessary to clear up the large question of our attitude to the sort of films that are being made. It is quite irrelevant to complain that we are no longer producing films of the radical nature of Today He Live and the like. The external situation has completely altered, and in fact documentary is doing more useful work in a practical way than it ever has.

One hears the complaint that too much time is spent on making educational films, alleged to be easy meat for the skilled director. Too much time, the miner may think, is spent in hewing coal. Surely it is a tribute to the place documentary has earned for itself that it has been given so much of the responsibility for this work. If we have a progressive aim, it is time for rejoicing when even a part of it comes to be realized. Documentary has called so long and so loud for the use of film in all kinds of education and enlightenment that those who sneer at instructionals become themselves immediately suspect. For now we have actually to perform some of those tasks which, earlier, were only the subject of agitation. Nor is it so easy to make teaching films. In fact, we have to go a long way before establishing a proper theory of educational film; we must study the problems of fore- and background films more deeply, examine the varied needs of special audiences, and find a way of making this important medium cheaper and more accessible.

There is as much a place as ever for the general interpretive film; indeed in some senses we are at an advantage over pre-war days, and are certainly assured of a wider audience. If films

(Continued page 111, top col. 1)

### WORLD WIDE

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### FILMS ON THE MACHINERY OF DEMOCRACY

### ALEC SPOOR-PRO, National Association of Local Government Officers

SINCE 1918, practically every man and woman tell you what a county, borough or district coun-community centres, parks, swimming pools and over 21 in Britain has had a vote in a Parliamentary election, and since 1945 the same franchise has been extended to local government elections. We are, therefore, a complete democracy enjoying government of the people, by the people, and for the people, both nationally and locally.

But are we? In 1935, a National Government was elected by the votes of 39 per cent of the electors. In 1945 a Labour Government was elected by the votes of 36 per cent of the electors. On each occasion, one voter in every four neglected to vote. At the county council elections in 1937, only one in 18 of the electors in Devon and only one in 14 of the electors in Cambridgeshire cast their votes. In the six annual elections between 1933 and 1938, the percentages of electors voting for South Cambridgeshire rural district were 8.4, nil, 1.2, nil, 1.5, and nil respectively. And of a sample of 21 boroughs and county boroughs in 1938, the percentages voting ranged between 63.7 and 6.9—with the majority between 10 and 40 per cent. This is scarcely government by the people.

Is it government for the people? It can be that only if the people as a whole know what they can get from government, and see that they get it. But today not one person in a hundred could

cil does or might do, not one person in a hundred takes any interest in the activities of those bodies. understands the problems they are tackling, or even knows the names of his own councillors. And few councillors try to find out what their constituents think on any particular topic.

In practice, then, our democracy boils down to government of the people, by a handful of the people, for a handful of the people—with the rest entirely uninterested except when the rate demand arrives or the dustman does not.

If we want a real democracy, we must replace this indifference with constructive civic interest. And there, I believe, the film can do much.

The man in the street and the woman in the kitchen are bored by local government because it is big, complicated, and apparently remote from their personal concerns of home, food, children, work, and play. But if you were to take them behind the scenes, show them the new houses being designed and built (and ask them what sort of houses they wanted), the inspectors, analysts and bacteriologists weighing, sampling, and safeguarding their food, the nurses, doctors, and teachers working to give their children a good start in life, the surveyors, traffic experts and police making better roads to speed them to and from work, the council committees planning

places for play, they would soon be interested and eager to say what they wanted.

You cannot take them all behind the scenes; but the film can. Jill Craigie, in The Way We Live, translated maps into terms of human happiness and showed that even town-planning can stir the blood. Paul Rotha in Waterworks takes us along the pipe into the fascinating world of filters, pumps, wells, aqueducts, reservoirs, rivers and clouds that comes into our bathroom every time we turn on the tap, and in A City Speaks demonstrates how much the seemingly dull deliberations of the city council mean to the citizens of Manchester, at home and at school, at work and at play. Such films as Our School, Double Thread, Life Begins Again, and Twenty-four Square Miles, give their audiences, in John Grierson's phrase, 'the civic eye' through which they can see inside the walls and beneath the surface of governmental activities to the human values behind.

But we need many more such films—films that, to quote Grierson again, 'can strike a living spark across the gap between the administration and the citizen', films that will elucidate the mysteries of the rate demand note, simplify and dramatize the problems of the committee room, translate the medical officers' report into terms of human sickness and health, misery and happiness. There is here an enormous field for the documentary film maker, a field bearing a rich harvest of interest for the man with the imagination and enterprise to dig it out. And the men who do that, and those who finance their work, will be doing much more than make fine films: they will be helping to turn British democracy from an abstraction into a reality.

### INVISIBLE PLEASURES

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#### **BOOK REVIEW**

Going to the Cinema, by Andrew Buchanan. (Phoenix House.) 7s. 6d.

This book is dedicated to the 'adult cinema-goer of tomorrow and it fulfils its dedication by placing before its readers a clear exposition of every aspect of film-making.

The author takes the film from its very inception through its shooting, editing, distribution and final exhibition and in concise words and simple terms he explains exactly 'what goes on'. There is not the faintest suggestion of talking down to the young amateur-Mr Buchanan makes use of plenty of technical terms but is always careful to explain such terms in a manner which will in no way irritate any reader who may be at the age where he is slightly allergic to any hint of the school text-book.

There is a chapter on Documentary which ought to catch the interest of those who have never thought of the cinema in terms of anything but the Big Picture. The making of cartoons is clearly explained and there is another chapter about the news reel. The final chapter is an invitation to the young reader to learn all about the cinema and to set himself up as a critic of all the films he sees.

### FEATURE FILM MUSIC AND THE DOCUMENTARY

### By MUIR MATHIESON

THE influence of the documentary on feature film cinema the documentary film can be of tremendproduction has become increasingly significant during the last ten years. During the thirties this tendency was only slight, manifesting itself in pictures like the Korda-Flaherty film Elephant Boy. World War II resulted in a rapid expansion of the process, eventually producing pictures which were known simply as 'feature-documentaries'. The advent of such directors as Cavalcanti into the commercial studios brought about a liaison of fact and fiction that made this country's war films more realistic than those of. say, the United States, where no large independent documentary movement could be coopted to vitalize Hollywood output. It was on these early fictional-documentaries that the new British film industry was founded, with productions of the Forty-ninth Parallel and First of the Few calibre, giving our film makers the morale and prestige to attempt Henry V, The Way Ahead, and Men of Two Worlds. Such is the debt that features owe to documentary.

During the present transition from war to a period of desperate economic recovery the documentary influence remains. True, with the departure of Churchills and Spitfires the purely factual aspect becomes less spectacular but the lesson of the fighting days has not been forgotten. As Harry Watt prepares to follow through the triumph of The Overlanders with another outdoor story from Australia; as Ealing Studios dispatch cameramen to the Antarctic to secure backgrounds for Scott of the Antarctic; as Shepherd's Bush studios shoot Rescue, a film version of the factual story of the Dakota snowbound crash of a few months ago; so the value of a realistic setting to commercial productions is demonstrated far more clearly than it was before the war. Social problems of the day are more courageously tackled by film makers than before; again the documentary influence leads the way.

It is also true that feature film music has derived considerable benefit from the realm of documentary. Apart from the fact that the raising of the general standards of intelligence and subject matter in British films has inevitably given more encouragement to composers to enter the industry and that, having taken the plunge, they have found dramatic material worthy of the finest possible musical creative effort, there are one or two special reasons why feature music is a debtor to documentary music.

For good or evil, it has long been recognized that music today falls into two strongly divided camps—the 'popular' music (dance music, jazz, swing, light 'numbers') on the one hand, and on the other, serious music (symphonic music, chamber works, opera and ballet). Despite the fact that many more people are willing to change camps today than they were ten years ago, the two divisions remain—the 'Great Schism' as one very famous musicologist called it. This has meant that serious composers have tended to draw further and further away from the general trend, avoiding the musical pursuits of the millions and consorting with their fellow-intellectuals with music that they—and very often only they understand. A 'vacuum' tendency set in.

When a composer of serious music turns to the

ous value in bringing the musician face to face with reality. Documentarians as a race are realists; composing music for documentary requires realism. I remember the case of Dr Ernst Meyer and Cavalcanti's North Sea. The film was about the sea and the fishing fleets. The director sent his composer into the fishing towns, where he went to sea with the trawlers and worked on board among the fish and the nets. It must have been a hectic business, but the result was the realistic score that the director was after. At Denham we have a similar instance at the moment, for William Alwyn (for many years a documentary music expert) has recently been to Ireland prior to the composition of music for an essentially native production, Captain Boycott. The move towards personal contact between composers and modern society finds particular expression in the factual field, and in this respect the documentary aids the feature score by giving musicians a chance to find their feet on the terra firma of filmic reality before going on to the stringent requirements of the commercial cinema.

The further point can be made here, that as features gain more and more from the factuals, realistic music becomes increasingly important. In Men of Two Worlds, for example, thousands of feet of native music were recorded in Tanganyika by Thorold Dickinson's location unit; this was

brought back to this country and Arthur Bliss was able to spend many absorbing hours in examining it before proceeding with his score, all of which was based on the native music. Thus he had the opportunity, through the influence of the documentary technique, to create realistic music which had for its background the colourful sound of the jungle, yet within the artistic conception of the film allowed him to write music that was satisfying to Western ears. Generally speaking, the opportunity which films offer for the musician to avail himself of local folk tunes and to use them as a basis for his composition is a very desirable condition and one which, in its sphere, adds further to the documentary flavour of feature productions.

As a field for musical experiment, the feature film maker again looks to the documentarian for a lead. There is so little time and money available in features for trial and error; everything must go to a schedule and mistakes mean serious delays. In documentary schedules are not so rigid and the composer is not swamped by dialogue; he has a chance to experiment, for the atmosphere of documentary is more congenial to the man with new ideas than is the bustle of the production people trying to achieve a delivery date for a publicized premicre. For this reason a number of composers are seen at their best in factual

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### SCIENTIFIC FILM NEWS

### By

### MICHAEL MICHAELIS

'To promote the national and international use of the scientific film in order to achieve the widest possible understanding and appreciation of scientific method and outlook, especially in relation to social progress'. Thus reads the first object of the Scientific Film Association.

Scientific films are being recognized by daily widening sections of the public for the valuable contributions they are making to the social, industrial and educational life of the community. The part played by the Scientific Film Association in bringing about this recognition is of major importance. With almost 450 corporate and ordinary members, including Scientific Film Societies having a total membership of about ten thousand, the Association is the only body in this country representing the interests of users of scientific films. Its activities, carried out almost entirely by voluntary labour, are very widespread. Within the compass of this short article, only some of the more important aspects of the Association's work can be outlined. It is hoped to enlarge upon these and to present further Scientific Film News in later issues of this journal.

Apart from the Scientific Film Societies, three of the foremost users of scientific films, served by the Association, are Industry, Medicine and Schools.

Industry: A conference was held by the Scientific Film Association in London on March 6th, 1947, under the title 'Films in Industry'. Over two hundred of the country's leading industrial concerns sent delegates who were addressed by a number of experts in the subject.

Mr R. K. Neilson Baxter spoke on the 'Industrial Film Maker's Problems' and called for close co-operation between industrial sponsor and film producer.

Instructor Commander J. A. Burnett, RN, dealt with the effective use of films and film strips in technical training and gave some practical demonstrations.

Mr F. H. Perkins traced the film's contributions through the various stages of technical instruction.

Mr D. R. O. Thomas spoke of the film as an integrating medium treating imaginatively the responsibilities of industry within the community.

An open forum for questions and a film show concluded the conference, which was held under the chairmanship of Sir Stephen Tallents, KCMG, CB, CBE.

Valuable work is progressing on bringing upto-date the interim list, compiled by the Industrial Committee of the Association, of 200 industrial films available in this country.

A scheme inaugurated by the Association for joint sponsorship of industrial training films, is approaching its practical working form. Under this scheme, a number of firms jointly sponsor films of interest to them all, thus reducing the cost per firm of film production.

Medicine: A catalogue of medical films available in Great Britain is being published jointly by the Association and the Royal Society of Medicine. Over 800 films will be listed, the result of investigations by Dr Brian Stanford, hon. secretary of the Medical Committee, working on behalf of the Association under a special grant from the Royal Society of Medicine.

The use of films in medical teaching has received widespread attention through conferences held by the Association last year. Lists of subjects on which films are desired by teachers of medicine have been published as a result of a detailed questionnaire to medical schools.

The establishment of a Central Medical Film Library in this country is being advocated as a means of making widely available the pioneer work of many individuals in this field. British medical films lead the world and should be freely available at least in their country of origin, if not beyond.

Schools: In so far as all scientific films can be said to be educational in the widest sense, the special value of such films as an educational tool is recognized by the Association. It is also appreciated that other visual aids, such as filmstrips, models and wall charts have a specific part to contribute to a coherent lesson.

In consequence of these considerations, the Association, through its Education Committee, drew up plans for the 'Visual Unit' comprising all these media. These plans, submitted to the Ministry of Education, were accepted and production of the first visual unit on Water Supply is almost complete. It marks an important step in the concept of visual education which the Ministry has recognized by the recent appointment of the National Council for Visual Education. Further memoranda on the production of visual units have been submitted to the Ministry and are receiving attention.

Film viewings for science teachers are now held regularly and methods for the appraisal of school films are being developed.

The collection of film data, appraisal of films and publication of supplements to the Association's film catalogues and film lists are proceeding apace to keep abreast of the growing quest for information from all parts of the world. Indeed, to complete this short survey, mention should be made of the international contacts being developed. An interim report on Scientific Films in Foreign Countries has been published. The preliminary investigation covered 33 countries throughout the world, albeit briefly, and additions will be made as more information becomes available. Conversely, too, the distribution of British films in those countries is being investigated and actively encouraged wherever possible.

Close contact is being maintained with UNESCO at whose disposal the Association has placed such services as its specialized knowledge best fits it to perform. Finally, in collaboration with l'Institut de Cinématographie Scientifique in Paris, preparations are being completed for the forthcoming inauguration of an International Scientific Film Association pointing the way to free interchange of films and knowledge between the peoples of the world.

The publications mentioned in this report are available from the Scientific Film Association, 34 Soho Square, London, W1.

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with a deep social message are not being made, it is sometimes a political failure; as often, the film is commissioned but subject to official delay. But, with a Labour Government, it is important to realize that new problems arise, and that the character of interpretive films must alter. It was heartening to read in a recent DNL a plea for more Labour films. The trade unions and co-ops are the natural allies of the documentary movement, and the good work done in their company needs extending. The task of pre-war was to produce films with a realist, human slant; today it has developed into that of fitting documentary to the new and wide functions that recent social legislation demands. To this end, we must enlist he aid of the Labour movement to supplement the programme of the COI. At the same time, it s necessary to get into contact with audiences and to widen them. In this two-way business, all echnicians need to be more closely in touch with the co-op guilds, union branches, film societies and other organizations which make up the nonheatrical audience. Lectures and publicity go and in hand with film-making. Note, hand in aand.

But these tasks will not be achieved without a concrete expression of the fundamental unity shared by technicians from separate units. A magazine is fine, but it's not enough; means must be found to canalize the energy of individuals to the general advantage. And we must get straight nour minds the question of what films are worth making. You see, we face tasks vastly beyond our capacity; it will be many years before we can satisfy the need for realist films of every kind. Until then, there isn't time for invidious comparisons; the job is to improve the quality, not restrict the variety, of the product.

(Continued from page 109, col. 3)

films; some of the best scores by Ralph Vaughan Williams have been for such pictures.

Lastly, we have to thank the documentarians for the splendid work they do in training composers for the feature film world. Composing for pictures is not easy; it is a specialized, highlytechnical procedure and cannot be acquired overnight. With so many young musicians of today feeling a desire to write for the screen, the outlook would be poor were it not for documentary. In the friendly atmosphere of the small unit, the young composer has a chance to study film procedure in detail. He has a picture of some two or three reels to contend with and is not overwhelmed with the necessity to write 50 minutes of music in about three weeks; the orchestration is not so complex, for the orchestra is smaller; the moods are more clearly defined in factual films than they are in features; all this gives the youthful writer his opportunity to acquire confidence as a picture expert.

The feature film has always been the better in this country for the support given it by a backbone of documentarians. In all branches of production, they have aided in the creation of a living and realistic standard of picture. In the case of music this is equally true. In bringing about a new contact between modern writers and the people, in presenting opportunities for musical experiment and in training newcomers to the industry, the documentary continues to render great service to the feature film makers.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

Mr Anstey has never seen the early German films he compares Odd Man Out to, than that his critical capacity lacks the necessary understanding of simple human emotions. Odd Man Out sets out to be a study in pity. I'd say it very largely succeeds but even assuming it did not, it would still be a very far cry from the conscious and 'purposeful' Nihilism of the German 1920s. These post 1918 war films were inspired by Kafka's discovery of God's indifference and even enmity to the human race, and the last thing they were concerned with was the portrayal of emotion. They were logical statements of the purposelessness of life as it was then conceived by their German makers. Their heroes were more often than not quite decent human beings (like Kafka's hero in the Trial), who had never done anything wrong but were 'arrested' all the same. The inevitability of an undeserved curse reminiscent of Oedipus Rex was the theme that the German artists were most fond of. Now Johnny was no Oedipus. He was a wrong 'un. His ideas were wrong, his politics vicious and unpractical, his ethics non-existent except as far (may be) as his organization was concerned. He deserved everything he got. He was an example of a very nasty type of human being whose evil nature found its fullest flower in Nazi Germany. And yet even he was worthy of pity, because he was a human being in adversity. Thus he became the test by which we are judged. We and also the bystanders who in the film came into accidental

sir: It would be more charitable to presume that Mr Anstey has never seen the early German films he compares *Odd Man Out* to, than that his critical capacity lacks the necessary understanding of simple human emotions, *Odd Man Out* knew not what he did.' Look at this man and pity him, because, like so many of us, he knew not what he did.'

Unfortunately Mr Wright's praise is as grotesque as Mr Anstey's comparison. Odd Man Out was an average film. But among so much bad a good average looks far better than it really is. It was only after I had seen The Man Within that I could account for the unsatisfactory patches which mar Odd Man Out. In The Man Within Sydney Box has at last found the secret of dressing up the 'highbrow' in 'lowbrow' clothing. [ think Carol Reed was aiming at something similar. The adult ideas were to be masked under the star appeal of James Mason and the old favourite cops and robbers theme. An admirable idea but unfortunately here and there Mr Reed could not quite make up his mind on how far the average audience could be trusted and was therefore guilty of playing down to the adolescent minds which would require the flamboyant but irrelevant artist to reassure themselves that it is only a film after all and that this kind of thing couldn't really happen in their own lives.

Overpraise is very dangerous. Look around in your own field, Mr Wright. British Documentaries are supposed to be the best in the world even when they are half an hour too long and talk the audience to sleep.

Yours very truly,

WALTER SULKA

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## TECHNICIAN'S ARTICLE ON NON-THEATRICAL DISTRIBUTION HAS PROVOKED THESE TWO REPLIES

sir: 'Inside Information on Non-Theatrical Distribution' by a Technician, certainly draws the spotlight to a problem, or rather a set of problems, that has caused, and indeed still does cause, much 'heartburning' among distributors of substandard films.

The Army Kinema Corporation distributes, and exhibits, more 16 mm. prints than any other single organization and, whilst I cannot relieve 'Technician's' intense despondency by giving him information of the COI's method of accepting and distributing 16 mm. prints, I propose to give a brief résumé of the care and method with which the AKC tackle this problem.

When placing an order with a laboratory, for the bulk printing of an individual subject, a strict instruction is given for a test print to be delivered before the bulk order is proceeded with. This print is carefully viewed by an expert viewer, the track is measured by a densitometer (yes 'Technician', I am happy to inform you the AKC does possess a densitometer, and we know how to read it) and on the result of this print it is decided (a) if the print can be accepted as a criterion for the remaining prints, (b) what adjustments by the laboratory are necessary to achieve this purpose; note a further test print may be called for after such adjustments, before permission is granted to proceed with the bulk order, (c) to stop distrbution of the subject on 16 mm; this is only decided after consultation with the laboratory has revealed that no better result is obtainable.

The AKC Distribution Department at Wembley is equipped with four excellent 16 mm., in addition to two 35 mm. viewing theatres, and, it is in these that the prints of bulk orders are carefully examined by viewers especially trained for the job. An inquiry from any laboratory manager will confirm that the AKC insist on a high technical quality in their 16 mm. prints and, further, that when prints are rejected, intelligent technical reasons are given for such rejections.

Referring to 'Technician's' article again, we have now reached the stage when a good print has found its way into circulation, and, it is here quite frankly the AKC benefits considerably from the experiences gained during the war by the Army Kinematograph Service. During this period it was discovered that, although prints of the highest quality were used, the results on the screen, both picture and sound, were frequently disastrous. This was due almost entirely to the fact that although service engineers had a good general idea of the necessary adjustments needed from time to time on the projector, they did not possess a good medium to carry out such adjustments. As a result a technical panel was formed comprised of army personnel who were acknowledged experts in each section of their particular branch of the film trade. From this panel came two most comprehensive test reels (screen and sound) for primary use when making adjustments to mobile projectors. These test reels are now used extensively by AKC service engineers in order that the best possible results should be obtained from the projectors in use. Further, as far as acoustics are concerned, in all courses held by the AKC for projectionists, etc., periods are set aside for special instruction and practical guidance is given on this matter.

It will be seen, therefore, that the Army Kinema Corporation is very alive to the problems affecting 16 mm. presentation and one must agree with 'Technician' there are many. However, we have proved that providing each individual does his, or her, part, the result on the screen can be comparable to that obtained by the use of 35 mm. prints.

Yours faithfully,

L. S. BAKER
Distribution Manager
Army Kinema Corporation

DEAR SIR,

As 16 mil. operators of considerable experience we were interested in the article on 'Non-Theatrical Distribution' by a technician in the April-May issue of your journal.

With what 'Technician' writes about the quality of most 16 mil. prints we must heartily agree; with his categorical statement about 16 mil. projection we beg to differ.

We have, a week or two ago, taken over a village hall which has been acoustically treated and which, for the past year, has been served by the former owner with twin 35 mil. projectors of 1938 manufacture.

When we acquired the hall we installed a 'single' Carpenter 16 mil. projector with some misgivings as we were not at all sure how the audience would react to the two 'breaks' in each two-hour show, but the capital cost of twin projectors was a limiting factor at the time.

The results of this experiment are as follows:

(1) We have had larger audiences at *each* of the nine shows we have given to date than the previous owner had at *any* time during the year he operated; (2) we have been congratulated by all on the quality of sound and picture and we are, each evening, attracting people who did not previously attend the exhibitions; (3) we have been visited by two local 35 mil. theatre managers and, after seeing and hearing, both have reacted in the same manner. (Well, if I had not been present myself I would not have believed it.)

As to method: the sound is tested at least twice weekly by running through both a gliding frequency and a constant frequency test film. Before each show the whole optical system is throughly dismantled and cleaned. This is done in a routine order so that nothing is missed. The films are examined on arrival and between each showing. After the renters had been saddled with a few 'reverse charge' trunk calls for replacement copies we now find they exercise greater care in the choice of copies they send us! Records for the non-sync are chosen to suit the feature and no departure from arranged programme is permitted.

The one factor on which we cannot rely is the quality of the prints. On this point we are in entire agreement with 'Technician'. Many times at the start of the film the writer has, momentarily, been certain that the shutter has shifted on its spindle only to find that the 'ghost' has been caused by the optical printer.

We cordially invite 'Technician', if he is ever in this part of the country, to call on us and we will only be too pleased to let him see what can be done with a 16 mil. outfit given a decent print.

Yours faithfully,

GEORGE HAIR, Director Inman Mobile Cinemas Ltd Dumfries

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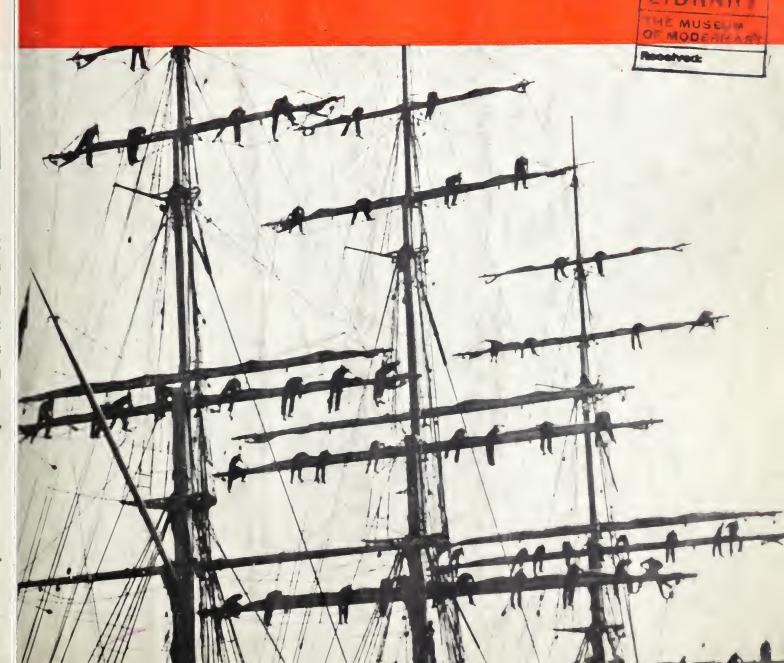
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### BALANCE SHEET

W ITH a crucial year more than half spent, it is desirable to look around us and to examine the present characteristics of the documentary scene.

Undoubtedly the brightest part of the picture is provided by documentary's international efforts. Both in UNESCO and UNO there is a consciousness of what the documentary film can do and an anxiety to give it its chance. Documentary relations with these two bodies are close and cordial. The plans being made lack nothing in ambition: only a sense of urgency and of the need for speed sometimes seems to be missing. Then there has been the informal meeting at which was born the World Union of Documentary. Perhaps there has been no more stirring moment in the whole history of documentary than this assembling around a table in a Brussels hotel of documentary representatives and observers from ten countries, ranging from Poland to Australia, workers from all over the world sharing the common language of documentary purpose.

In Britain the picture is less encouraging. The Central Office of Information move slowly and with confusion of purpose towards an inadequate goal. It is allowing the vision of democracy's promised land to disappear in a sunset of red tape. In the educational film field, inter-departmental jealousies and political reaction appear to obstruct the development of official plans.

Also it is sadly clear in Britain that the marked influence which documentary films were having in the last years of the war upon the feature films is now most definitely on the wane. Indeed, to some not unfriendly observers, it appears that the artistic and truly creative hey-day of the Rank empire is already passing and that *The Way Ahead* has led only to *The Blue Lagoon*. All is not yet lost, but it appears probable that, if producers wish to counter the present signs of defeatism, of escape into sadistic crime or puerile romance, then they can do it best by a concentration upon the kind of documentary techniques that Louis de Rochemont is so brilliantly developing in the United States and Rossellini in Italy in their films *Boomerang* and *Open City*.

But perhaps the most alarming sign of the times is the widespread adverse comment heard during the recent Brussels Film Festival upon the quality of the British documentary entries. All planning, all long-term blue-printing is a waste of time unless it can be assumed that films of adequate quality will be obtained to fulfil the plan. And this assumption we feel is one which in the past has been too easily made. In Britain today documentary films are made too slowly and when they come they are often mediocre. Here is a challenge which must be met and met quickly. In our efforts to secure documentary's true place in the world today, let us make quite sure that documentary remains fit to occupy it.

At its inaugural meeting the World Union of Documentary adopted an impressive resolution calculated to make clear the determination of documentary workers everywhere to ally themselves with progressive social forces. Such a resolution must be implemented not with words and with speeches but with films. And in planning films to assist the forward march of the world's peoples, it is essential that the functions of documentary should be interpreted in the broadest possible terms. It is easy at this critical time to become impatient with all work which does not appear directly to promote social change. It is easy to look back to an awe-inspiring but quite imaginary documentary past when all energy was concentrated upon films attacking the problems of malnutrition, slum housing, and unemployment. The plain fact is that memory has telescoped documentary history and that between 1930 and 1939 the films of direct sociological purpose were fewer and further between than they are today.

The time may well come when it will be held that documentary's most important contribution to social progress has been in reinterpreting and integrating academic knowledge in the light of the methods and purposes of social organization. The documentary medium is a political instrument only in so far as all true education is political. The documentary worker who can feel passionately only about films which make direct political party propaganda is most likely a poor or a jaded film-maker. If the honest political opportunities (that is the educational opportunities) are to be grasped, then they will be grasped by film-makers who feel as passionately about the pure exposition in the civic interest of some technological problem as they do about an election result. For documentary is a matter of dramatic interpretation and exposition operating on a plane above the level of party politics. Or to sum up the position another way: the most effective propagandist is in the long run the educationalist who is conscious of social needs.

### WELCOME TO SCOTLAND

A THOUSAND years hence, some zealot may sit down and write, with all the simplifications that perspective gives, a Book of the Genesis of the documentary film movement.

Perhaps he will be—as that earlier zealot was—an historian of such clear perception, that he will be able to distil the whole revolutionary proceedings into seven creative days. Certainly he will be amazed by the revelation that so many of these days must be sited not in Soho Square but in Scotland.

To carry this metaphor too far risks much besides blasphemy, but at least it is time to remind the South how much has been pioneered in the North.

John Grierson himself—that goes without saying. *Drifters* was made in England? But who but a Scot would have shot his first film about the herring?

Not the facts themselves, but the art with which they were presented was the secret of the early success of documentary. The magazine which lifted public appreciation of film on to the level of high art, and set the highbrows scurrying to see the latest EMB or GPO product, was the *Cinema Quarterly*, edited and published in Scotland.

Statistically, Scotland is satisfied, if she provides one item of any kind to every ten from England. There are 44 million people in England, only  $4\frac{1}{2}$  million in Scotland. But start counting film technicians, particularly documentary film technicians.

Scotland was the first nation boldly to present itself on the screen in a planned series of films for all the world to see. The seven Films of Scotland—about the people, economics, fisheries, sport, education, agriculture, civics, were executed on a national scale by a Films Committee of the Scottish Development Council, with the aegis of the Secretary of State above it. That was eight years before the accident of war finally gave us a peacetime Central Office of Information.

For some years before the war, two Scottish Directors of Education, Allardyce of Glasgow and Frizell of Edinburgh, were developing visual education in schools. They had their own silent films made, and these and many other films were collected into the Scottish Central Film Library. Kensington's Central Film Library only grew up during the war, and Committee A and Committee B are only just about to give us our first English programme of planned visual material for schools.

When the war first started, it was a group of Glasgow school teachers, using the resources of the Scottish Central Film Library, who extracted sufficient money from the Treasury to pioneer the first non-theatrical scheme for general rather than commercial purposes. They collected motor cars, converted mains projectors to batteries, and drove thousands of miles round the Highlands, throughout one of the worse winters on record, so that their evacuated schoolchildren could see films. If Thomas Baird (a Scotsman) was able later to persuade the Treasury to finance the Ministry of Information's non-theatrical scheme, it was largely because this pioneer work had proved that the thing was possible.

Distribution is still being pioneered in Scotland.

The Highland Films Guild, which Alastair McNeil Weir has organized, represents all the main interests (civic, governmental, commercial) of the Highland Counties, and with help from St Andrew's House and finance from the Carnegie Trust, is bringing good single-feature programmes to villages which have never seen a film.

And now we have the first International Festival of Documentary Films. The introductory leaflet points out that it is no accident that the Festival is being held in Britain. Let us be honest and admit that it is no accident either that it is being held in Edinburgh. There could be nothing more apt than to bring the whole matter to a focus-point in the birthplace of so much that is fundamental to documentary's progress.

There will be four separate performances in the city's largest cinema and supplementary performances in the Guild theatre. Films to be shown: Paisa, Farrebique, A String of Beads, Indonesia Calling, Cumberland Story, and shorts from France, Denmark, Poland, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Australia and Canada.

Naturally, this article was drafted by a Scotsman. But DNL assures its readers that the Board is unanimous in its approval. We wish the Festival every success. Welcome to Scotland!

### NOTES OF THE MONTH

The cover still on this issue is from a Danish film Schoolship

#### One Up to Belgium

EVERYONE who went to the Brussels Film Festival was impressed by the efficiency of the organization, the wide variety of the programme and, not least, the helpfulness, courtesy and generosity of the Belgian Government and the various Festival officials. One of the most striking aspects of the Festival was the vast public enthusiasm for the more serious and specialized programmes. It was almost impossible to fight one's way into the scientific film show, which, incidentally, was held in a hall with large seating capacity at the same time as the projection of an American feature film to a rather sparse audience in a small hall nearby. The British film industry, mainly via the BFPA, brought off a big scoop by putting flags inscribed 'See a good British Film' on the bonnets of most of the local taxis. There was also a British Information Centre which attracted a large number of visitors, many of whom bombarded the staff with pertinent and serious questions. In this re-

spect the Centre left something to be desired. Despite the availability of a considerable number of roneoed handouts, there was a definite lack of personnel for answering questions. Documentary production was given too little prominence (possibly because interest in this branch of film-work had been underestimated) and, for most of the time, there was no one at the inquiry desk specially briefed for answering questions on documentary developments in Britain; yet such questions accounted for a large percentage of the daily queries. Nevertheless there can be little doubt that the British Centre was very much more successful than its American counterpart, which, in the words of a Brussels newspaper, 'resembled a dance hall on a transatlantic liner'. Nor, film for film, did the US industry manage to stand up to the product of this country, of France, and above all of Italy which, with Sciuscia, Vivere in Pace, Il Sole Sorge Ancora and the superb Paisa, proved itself to be the most important production centre in the world today.

# THE FILMS ACT

Por twenty years there has been legislation to protect and develop the British film production industry. This year it is due once again for revision. On the two previous occasions when a Films Act was debated (in 1927 and 1937) the case for protection was, however, not easily made. British production was small and helpless in the face of Hollywood's numerical and technical superiority, while economically its affairs were literally nobody's business. There was little public realization of the power of the film medium and of the need for making it part of the cultural and economic life of the country.

In the main the case had, therefore, to be argued in a 'Buy British' spirit in a desperate attempt to stem the Hollywood flood.

In the end, British films got a better showing, but they were bad films for the most part, and the patriotic sense of the cinema-going

public was severely strained.

Today, circumstances are different. Although Hollywood is economically as powerful as ever and remains the chief supplier of the world's films, it has lost much of its technical and qualitative superiority. British film-making, on the other hand, has gained immensely in prestige and has shown, during the war years, that it has both imagination and a sense of reality. The argument for protection and for guaranteeing the British film-maker more screentime in the cinemas has now shifted on to grounds of quality. It is no longer a case of saying, rather wanly, this country could produce films, too, if it had a chance. Today it can produce films that have already made a contribution to film-making as well as sent the coins rolling into the box-office.

This improvement in quality of entertainment is, however, limited in extent. For feature films, which constitute the bulk of British studio production today, account for less than half the cinema programme. The remaining  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours are taken up by bad American second features or equally noxious British 'featurettes'. Occasionally a stray short is taken in like an orphan of the storm, but it is rarely a welcome addition to the house. If the issue is to be quality, then it is the supporting programme (the second feature and the shorts) which needs the legislators' particular attention.

The main bone of contention is the fact that the low quality of the supporting programme is not due to lack of talent in this country. The documentary and short section of the British industry has earned a considerable reputation. It has also an extensive production capacity. In the last five or six years as many feet of film have come out of the documentary and short units as all the feature studios together. Yet there is no market in the cinemas for their productions. During the war, largely as a result of special arrangements between the Government and the trade, a number of films like Target for Tonight, Western Approaches, Desert Victory and World of Plenty did enjoy wide distribution in the cinemas and proved box-office successes. But with the end of the war the barriers have been raised once again. Yet the success of the Rank-sponsored series, 'This Modern Age', over the post-war years proves that there is a market if the trade is willing. There is the talent and capacity in this country to produce not only shorts but longer story documentaries, to take the place of the present low-grade supporting films. There is also scope for cartoons, comedies, short story and other types of film which could add variety and balance to the cinema programme.

So long as the whole machinery of film renting, aided and

abetted by the existing Films Act, operates in favour of the cheap and nasty, no improvement in the supporting programmes is, however, possible. The present Films Act introduced a cost test for feature films as a guarantee of quality, but provided no cost test for shorts. By artificially dividing films according to length into two categories—long and short—it encouraged the production of 'featurettes', short films padded out to just over 3,000 feet to qualify for long film quota. But it is above all the hand of the big renting companies and of the three major cinema circuits which is at work. It is they who determine what is to be the fate of the independently produced film, whether it be feature, documentary or short. Today, it is as plain as it has ever been that it is only the American film or the British film produced by the big combines which has full access to the cinema market. The inalienable freedom of the others is the freedom to want.

The proposals submitted to the Board of Trade by the producers' associations all agree in recommending measures to reduce further American penetration into the production and exhibition branches of the industry and to increase the screen-time allocated to British films. They also agree on a new quota system based on a division of films into first features, second features or intermediates and shorts (instead of just long and short as in the past) which should help to eliminate some of the shoddy productions encouraged by the present Act. But this alone will not solve the problem of the supporting programme. A reasonable cost test to ensure higher quality for all categories is essential. It would prevent renters paying the ridiculously low figures they offer at present for short and documentary films, a figure which does not even cover production costs and is often an insult to the maker. The new Act should prevent such films being bought for less than production cost and, if they are rented, the producer should get a more equitable percentage of the receipts. A separate contract should be required for each film to reduce the dangers of block-booking, the practice by which exhibitors are forced to take films they do not want in order to get the film they are really interested in.

It is also most important that producers should have better representatives on the Cinematograph Films Council which is the body operating the present Films Act. At the moment only two producers have seats, Mr Rank and Sir Alexander Korda, as against four exhibitors' and two renters' representatives. The documentary and short section has no representation at all.

All these proposals, and the counter-proposals from the exhibitors must, however, be seen against the economic background of the industry and of Britain's financial relations with America. Hollywood interests will lobby hard to prevent any further measures designed to raise the volume and quality of British production. The American companies' takings from abroad (of which 75 per cent come from Britain) represent the whole of their profits. They naturally fear increasing competition. There is the further complication of the Rank organization's own relations with Hollywood, and the carrot of increased distribution for British films in the States which suggests some arrangement with regard to the future of American films in Britain.

The successful development of British film-making and the quality of the entertainment offered to the cinema public depend on the action which the Government will take. The new Films Act is one of the keys to the problem.

# IMPROVING BRITAIN'S FILM BUSINESS

# By

# IVOR MONTAGUE

The trade unions, that is, the organizations of the workers, in the film business—the technicians and non-technical craftsmen, the actors, extras, musicians—have unitedly\* presented certain opinions on the protection and improvement of Britain's film industry to the Board of Trade.

The self-interest of those who earn their living in the film business naturally urges such characters to decide that such a business should exist and be encouraged. But here self-interest marches with national interest.

Simply a squawk 'Preserve the film industry for me to work in' could not be expected to command much sympathy among the wider public, especially during a period when the man-power needs of valuable industries are clamorous.

But Britain needs a film industry and an expanded one.

### Partly it needs it to save dollars.

However, expansion on the scale necessary can't be achieved quickly enough. It would require studio building and equipment manufacture on a scale impossible with the recently existing queue of priorities. So, for saving dollars now, some other means is necessary. Voluntary measures won't achieve the trick, for the British industry is overwhelmingly as to retailing, wholesaling and production, dominated either by direct US interests, or by big concerns whose profit from American product (i.e., US indirect interest) is greater than their British interest, hence who have no particular interest in saving dollars. Hence the Chancellor's powers to impose an *ad valorem* tax.

But still more Britain needs a strengthened and independent industry because films are not soap.

Even if you could afford to pay for imported films, it would not be a matter of indifference to you whether you saw one film or another, as it is whether you wash with one piece of soap or another. After the latter, either way you're clean. After the former, you will be left with a lifelong different impression, according to whether you saw film A or film B.

\* Mr T. O'Brien, MP, of the National Association of Theatrical and Cinematograph Employees, has stepped rather sharply out of the ranks in a BBC broadcast. Mr O'Brien's views are his own, they do not differ widely from those of his cronies, Johnson (of the Motion Picture Producers of America), Walsh (of the IATSE), and Mr Walter Fuller (of CEA). His organization (the NATKE) subscribed with the other employees' organizations in the FIEC to a common memorandum—IVOR MONTAGUE.

It cannot be a matter of national indifference what films we see. Nor what is the general content of that big part of screen time that comes from abroad.

Something like 80 per cent of British screentime falls to American films. Don't run away with the illusion that the ideas in American films and in British films are the same, because they have a similar, or at least a mutually comprehensible language on the sound-track.

Some American speak the same idea-language as some Englishmen; others, alas, speak a very different one.

Take the TU language, for example.

Congress has just passed, over the President's veto, anti-trade union legislation that would, thank God, at any rate at present be utterly impossible over here. If such legislation existed in Britain there is not one TU in the film business that would not be put out of business. The union shop would be out, such all-industry agreements as the Studio Features Agreement, the Shorts agreement, or the Labs agreement would be right out. Any strike (such as that recently of the repair and despatch workers) would be out if it could be pretended that it were jurisdictional, and no strike at all might take place with less than two months notice. Any union could be outlawed and any of whose officers were communists or can 'reasonably be supposed to be' such.

These are not, thank God, British ideas yet.

Is there any reason to suppose that these or similar ideas will seep into American films? Most certainly there is.

On March 27 this year Eric Johnson, president of the Motion Picture Producers' Association of America, insisted in Washington before the House Committee on un-American activities that 'the films are serving capitalism effectively as a propaganda medium', and promised that this service would be intensified.

At the end of April he stated, just before leaving for Europe to try to increase showing time for US films, that he had prepared for the expedition by a private discussion with President Truman on the importance of implementing American foreign policy through film distribution.

There are several hints from Hollywood's past on how this duty will be interpreted. MGM's insistence on distributing the anti-working class *Comrade* and anti-Soviet *Ninotchka* during the war, not only in Britain (despite a request to desist from the MOI) but also in Finland while that country was fighting in Russia is one example. Twentieth-Century Fox's false and lying *Chetnik* is another; here exhibition was persisted in despite official advice from the British Government.

But there are clearer hints from the present—e.g. the ugly scuffle among the major companies to be first with the titles *Soviet Spies* and *Iron Curtain*, etc., the declared intention to make a film of the report of the Canadian Royal Commission's report.

Note, it is the report that is to be used, not the trials or appeals which have already acquitted more than half those named as 'guilty' in the report itself. Note also Hollywood is not making a comedy—or tragedy—out of the Seattle spy trial, where the case collapsed because, when the FBI dictaphone record of the alleged 'Soviet Agents' conversation was at last reproduced in court, it turned out not to be about a secret formula but about a cooking recipe.

But more significant than the positive indications are the negative ones.

The pen this side has reported something of the witch-hunt started in Hollywood by the un-American Activities House Committee, the pose as sacrificial lambs, coerced into red propaganda against their will, by Adolphe Menjoy, Robert Taylor and Ginger Rogers (per her mother). The atmosphere, and the effects to be apprehended from this pressure, may be gauged from two lists of subversive films requiring investigation supplied to the said committee. First one includes Mission to Moscow. Understandable? Song of Russia. Well-yeah. Song to Remember. A bit odder. Why this one? Do you not remember, this showed the artist sacrificing wealth and devoting art not to love of woman alone but to the liberation of his country. A subversive idea. Action in the North Atlantic. Momansk was the convoy's port of destination; definitely bad. The seamen were hired for their voyage as a trade union HQ; inexcusable. Hitler's Children. So anti-Nazi that it must have been inspired by Communists. Finally -Strange Incident. An anti-lynching film. The lists' compiler commented: 'It is not hard to tell in what direction the propaganda is pointing'. Nor is it hard to tell where objections to it are pointing, either.

The second list of 'Red' films? Well, I will only tote that it includes *The Pride of the Marines*, Margie, and *The Best Years of Our Lives*.

I do not think it can be a matter of indifference o us if a large part of Britain's American diet omes to us following this sort of 'screening'.

Please note, it is not anti-American to make his point. All decent folk in Hollywood are finding the courage to hit back. Thirty thousand attended the Wallace meeting, where Katherine Hepburn forcibly denounced these goings on. Hedy Lamarr, Edward G. Robinson, Charles Chaplin, John Garfield, Emmet Lavery (Screen Writers Guild president), are only a few of the nany who have done so in writing. But if we show what we think of such tendencies, it will help the ones resisting over there. Their embloyers will think twice if anti-working class, anti-united nations, propaganda effect their export revenue.

It is incontestable anyway (at least incontestable by honest folk) that the British people need the screen medium for its own ideas. All the more while it is threatened with the cited threats.

It needs it for more than entertainment. However important relaxation and diversion in the midst of austerity may be—if they rate 80 per cent, 90 per cent, or even 95 per cent of screen ime, they do not rate 100 per cent, which under the present exclusively profit-motived structure of he industry, tied and penetrated by American export interest, is what Britain is getting.

Even radio has a third programme. And where on any British screen (except the negligibly few and tiny specialized cinemas) does any imported film other than an American appear. In Prague last year 28 cinemas were running British films at one time. Every town and village was running some. Find me one ordinary regular British fan who has ever seen even one Czech film.

And what about the cinemas as news? Would we stand for our newspapers being owned three-fifths by Americans and two-fifths by one magnate with American connections? And yet we take exactly that situation in news film.

Is it conceivable that if cinema had been invented even as late as broadcasting—cinema with its infinite possibilities for national education, national expression, international cultural get-together and get-to-know-each-other—it would ever have been allowed to get into the largely foreign and exclusively profit-interested stranglehold that grips it now?

That is why the unions are pressing their proposals, which fall mainly into two categories.

Proposals for getting a fairer share of boxoffice money and screen-time for the films that are made; tidying up and enlarging quota, re first feature and supporting quotas, bigger role for shorts, changed booking customs—relaxing of bars, increase of longer runs and return runs for British films. Proposals for strengthening independent production as against the monopolies with their big American interests; films bank, 4th (documentary) circuit, municipal cinemas, government ensured studio space, etc.

And a Films Council with strengthened powers to oversee these measures and also to ensure that the class-prejudices of the producers no longer deprive the industry of the benefit of Joint Production Committees.

But remember—none of these things will come willingly from the film business, dominated as it is by interests keen on most of them not coming to being.

And none will come spontaneously from a government, facing copious problems, jammed up with necessary prospective legislation, and grasping at the chance to escape more trouble by a line-of-least-resistance patching job whenever it can.

Only to the extent that public opinion—a particularly organized forward-seeing opinion with the TUC (that is, the non-film unions) in the first place—can be brought to understand the plain and simple fundamentals at stake will the government be moved. And remember, there will be plenty of active publicizing scoundrels taking refuge in the matchless intricacies of the structure of the film business (blinding 'em with science) to damp down any feeling that changes are needed.

So those who want Britain to have its own film business, and for that film business to play the worth-while role in the community that it can, have a busy time ahead of them. Hard work, but that's the job.

### A LETTER FROM COI FILMS DIVISION ON NON-THEATRICAL DISTRIBUTION

sir: The article by 'Technician' in the April-May issue of DNL, claiming to give inside information on non-theatrical distribution, frankly sets out to be a one-sided statement. Broadly, Technician's view is that a film when delivered from the hands of the production company may be technically irreproachable ('let us assume the studio has done its work perfectly' is the cheerful hypothesis from which he starts) but that everything is likely to go wrong from this point on.

It would be a fairer statement of the whole case to say that the quality of 16mm. film shows in England needs to be raised by the exercise of greater care and thought at every stage of the whole business. And it must start at production.

To do the production companies justice, we are long past the stage at which everybody connected with film-making sedulously avoided seeing (or hearing) films in 16 mm., and kept up his self-respect by a fantasy that his films were being distributed in 35 mm. There is still a long way to go, however.

Meanwhile, we shall not make the journey any quicker by indulging in all-round recriminations—the projectionists blaming the recordists, the recordist blaming the laboratories and the laboratories blaming the documentary producers. We undoubtedly need in England more opportunity for experiment in production for 16 mm., more up-to-date recording equipment, better laboratory equipment, more first-class projectors, and so on.

As to what COI can do to assist in the general improvement, the answer is that several things are being done. (a) COI is considering the possibility that future contracts on films intended primarily for 16 mm, use should have a clause providing that they will not be accepted until a 16 mm. copy has been approved. (b) Proposals have been made for an extension of the existing system of viewing 16 mm. prints, on delivery from the laboratories. (c) New projectors are on order. (d) A special drive to tighten up the technical inspection of the mobile units is in progress. Undoubtedly more could be done if COI had more staff and more money, and if the flow of equipment available for purchase were more copious. Incidentally, if Technician's criticisms had really done justice to the title 'Inside Information --- 'which his editors have bestowed

upon him, he would have admitted the difficulties which his brother-technicians have to encounter in securing equipment; and it is really unfair of him to suggest that a COI projector is not serviced until it has run to a standstill.

One final point: the implications of Technician's concluding paragraph is that all or most COI shows are given to rural audiences in village halls. The rural audience is, in fact, no more than ten per cent of the total COI non-theatrical audience and there has recently been a new drive to cut out those rural shows which do not attract satisfactory audiences. If Technician could spare time to see a first-class show, given by means of a tip-top 16 mm. projector, in a good factory canteen, or the assembly-hall of a school where a vigorous parent-teacher association meets to see films on children's health, or even in the best of the village halls, he might be convinced that it is not only the production studio which can, on occasion, do its work with something reasonably near to that perfection for which his soul obviously longs.

J. R. WILLIAMS
Films Division, COL

# NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

There has in the past been some criticism of the DNL policy of publishing reviews unsigned.

To compromise with the divergent views on the subject, therefore, a new system has been devised. In the future all films will be viewed by a permanent panel selected from members of the editorial board, who will take collective responsibility for the views expressed. Each review will continue as before to be individually written but, unless expressly stated to the contrary, this will have been contributed by one or other of the members of this panel. In the exceptional case where specialist audiences are involved, the source of review will be stated below.

May we again remind film units and sponsors that we cannot publish reviews unless they provide us with adequate information on films completed.

The names of the members of the reviewing panel are as follows: Stephen Ackroyd, Donald Alexander, Max Anderson, Paul Fletcher, Grahame Tharp, Sinclair Road.

### SUMMING UP No. 3

Pathé are to be congratulated on their initiative in bringing to the light of day some of the invaluable film records of world events which the newsreel companies amass over the years, but generally keep hidden away and unused in their vaults.

This series was described in the last issue of DNL—History on Film by Peter Baylis. It attempts to give a pictorial record of the main news events of each quarter and is designed primarily for school use. No. 3 deals with events of the first quarter of 1947.

One can appreciate the difficulty of collecting material giving adequate coverage of world affairs, but one's first reaction is to challenge the statement in Issue No. 3 that the principal events of the quarter took place in the British Empire! The temptation to look at world affairs from a domestic viewpoint is considerable. But particularly in a series designed for schools one expects wider perspectives.

This issue also has certain technical weaknesses, the sound track is bad, and the commentary rather ineffectual and badly spoken. Better quality library material, too, should have been available

Summing Up could do a much more valuable job if it had a stronger sense of what all this motley of events is about. What is happening in India is part of a whole pattern of development in South-East Asia. Food crisis in Germany, the coal crisis in Britain cannot be understood in isolation. The problems of one world, trying to adjust itself to new situations and to find new relationships, are indivisible.

But, despite its shortcomings, Summing Up has made a brave start. One should watch its future development with interest.

Brush Stripping of Cards. DATA Films for the Cotton Board. *Producer:* Donald Alexander. *Written and directed:* Peter Bradford. *Camera:* Stanley Rodwell. *Distribution:* Non-T. through Cotton Board. 12 mins.

DATA films for the Cotton Board are making an interesting series: here is one on industrial training, which will do much to justify documentary talk on the subject.

It does not matter that few people outside the industry will have any idea of what a card is or what it does that it has to be stripped. What does matter is that after seeing this film most people could go straight to the machine with a very good idea in their minds of *how* the job has to be done, and that is what the film was intended to teach the workers for whom it was designed.

Taking a single machine it first shows the whole process of brush stripping carried out at normal speed by the two men required. Next the movements are tabulated and the same operation is repeated in slow motion. Then in turn the movements of each man are analysed in detail and finally, to sum up the whole sequence of movement, repeated again. The relationship of this one machine to the others is, with one exception, shown by diagram in preference to actuality. This is one of the few questionable points, for the diagrams do not seem very clear. To the audience familiar with shop layout this may not be valid. One feels, too, that a more flexible use of the camera might have heightened the interest. Still, given the machine and the method, one could ask little more.

Experience of the use of industrial training films of this type is small, so that the information it will provide on audience reactions will be of considerable importance. One general comment should, however, be added. This is such a serious film. Instructional films must be coldly factual, but surely just a touch of humour or human interest would have helped to put the film over. And, between ourselves Data, try reading that opening title again—slowly!

Waterworks: Films of Fact. *Producers:* Paul Rotha and John Wales. *Script:* Miles Tomalin. *Director:* George Collins. *Camera:* Cyril Arapoff. \*

This film explains and describes the complex organization behind the production of a glass of water. It does this with considerable success and it is also exciting to find such an example of imaginative public relationship. It is therefore tragic that the film does not quite click, for it has a lifeless atmosphere of simplified technicalities and carefully arranged facts. This is due in the first place to the choice of facts emphasized. The explanation of filtration is clear but does not get very far, whereas more emphasis on chlorination could have led us to appreciate the relationship

between the ratepayer and the technician, between the man who gets indignant if perfectly good water tastes of chlorine and the man who wants to hold his job.

In the second place, the method of explaining is not always happy. An Isotype diagram which shows clouds clanking their way out of the sea may describe the Water Cycle but it can also lead to a healthy childish exasperation; for it is an example of a teaching approach which seems to say 'This may not look convincing but you jolly well ought to believe it anyway'. For, unfortunately, such a method could be equally well used to show how Father Christmas gets down chimneys. A livelier method could have avoided this by using simple demonstrations, and a brighter approach would have lessened the need to decorate this packet of facts with romantic clouds and accompanying music.

### THIS MODERN AGE

No. 8. Sudan Dispute.

No. 9. Development Areas.

Distribution: GFD. 20 minutes each film.

It is probably part of the policy of the producers of *This Modern Age* to allow to their directors as much variety of approach as is consistent with uniformity of presentation, and perhaps for this reason the series shows as yet no sign of becoming a monotonous succession of die-stamped articles so similar in design that the audience knows what to expect as soon as the main title appears on the screen. Or perhaps the overall editorial policy of the series is being allowed to form itself as issue follows issue. Whichever may be the case, there is a very marked difference in the way the two latest issues approach their subjects.

Sudan Dispute undoubtedly fulfils the function of giving us a picture of part of the world of which most of us know little but for which we are all to some extent responsible. But whether the picture we are given is an accurate one is, perhaps, more questionable. Is the Sudan really the strapping, bright-futured youngster that the film describes? Is its Government actually such an exemplar of enlightened, beneficial rule? Is the possibility of Egyptian sovereignty in fact quite as unpleasant as the vox ex machina would have us believe? The answer to these questions may indeed and in truth be yes, but the fact that they are uppermost in the mind after one has seen the film indicates something wrong with the way the subject has been treated. This Modern Age sets out to be an independent screen review. At all costs it should avoid arousing the suspicion that it is temporarily and honorarily serving as the smooth-tongued spokesman of officialdom-or indeed of any other section of the community.

Happily, an unbiased approach is the outstanding characteristic of *Development Areas*;

and, even better, the maintenance of a true balance between black and white does not result in a lifeless grey. Well-scripted, well directed, well edited, the film gives as complete a survey as one could expect in twenty minutes of the growth and present appearance of these stigmata of a misspent national life. The treatment is forceful and, compared with the mouselike timidity of many films on similar subjects, as bold as a lion—a circus lion, anyway. It is on issues such as this, rather than Sudan Dispute, that This Modern Age should build a reputation as an adult, entertaining, informative, reliable screen periodical.

Taken for Granted. Production: World Wide for Middlesex County Council. Producer: James Carr. Script and Director: Mary Francis. Camera: Cyril Phillips. Distribution: Not yet announced. 20 mins.

'Before 1865 all the London sewers discharged into the Thames, by some 64 separate openings. They caused the river to stink prodigiously, and also infected most of London's drinking water.'

That is not a quotation from the commentary of the film, but from Sherwood Taylor's Century of Science, in which, with an almost Elizabethan robustness, he surveys our more immediate past—what, it appears, might well be called 'The Dirtiest Hundred Years in European History'. Unfortunately, there is no echo of Sherwood Taylor's forceful handling of his subject in the treatment of this film. Well-made though it be, and it is a competently directed and photographed film, it yet lacks that imaginative treatment which would take it out of the rut where so many documentaries of today are to be found.

This film, the story of the disposal of the sewage of a modern urban community, gives the impression of a painstaking preparation of its subject. We are interested in it because this story is unknown in detail to most of us, but never are we stimulated into that rapt attentiveness which overcomes hard seats or sends us out into the sunshine at the end, if not with a mission, at least aware that someone else has one. It is possible that the reason for so much of the dullness of documentary today, and to be quite fair this film is lively compared with some others, lies in just this very carefulness of research into subject-material. Perhaps we must learn to throw the net of our investigations wider.

Who would think, for instance, of reading or (I hope) re-reading Hans Andersen's The Tin Soldier and Charles Sale's genially Rabelaisian The Specialist as part of the necessary preparation for writing a script about sewagedisposal? But each of these would add a quality lacking in the film as it is. The first would have reminded us that gutters in spate are admirable places for the sailing of paper boats (what worse hazard than a drain?); and the second that the foundation of all sewage systems lay very much in the earth-for as Lem Putt said, 'It's a mighty sight better to have a little privy over a big hole than a big privy over a little hole'. Even without such lively aids, surely the director, producer or script writer at one time or another has lost something valuable down a drain-maybe in his or her distant childhood such a photogenic object as a beloved goldfish or a tadpole? And where are the rats?

In spite of this general criticism, however, there emerges from the film a good sense of the admirable public service which quietly deals with this perpetual human problem, carrying out its

work, in this example, at the minute cost of 2d. per week per ratepayer. The control of sewage has progressed a good deal since the period of the quotation from Sherwood Taylor. 'Down the drain' is no longer synonymous for 'All is lost'. Indeed, the by-products of modern sewage-disposal methods, fertilizer for the land and methane gas, properly used, are perhaps symbolic of the general trend of today which seeks to use our resources according to our needs with an ever-growing insistence on the elimination of thoughtless waste.

Salt. Realist for ICI. *Director*: Max Anderson. *Camera*: Ronald Craigen. 10 mins.

Ammonia. Realist for ICI. *Direction*: Bob Anderson and Denys Parsons. *Camera*: A. E. Jeakins. *Diagrams*: Diagram Films. 10 mins.

The increasing number of school teaching films sets a reviewing problem. It is axiomatic that a film designed for a particular audience should only be judged by its effect upon that audience. Films such as these two need 'reviewing' in the school itself. But until some mechanism is devised for routine class room testing they must continue to be assessed by the minds of adults.

These points are stressed because the reaction of an adult to these films is that they are *dull*. In neither film is there a single memorable shot—but is this true for children? Only practical use will show.

Salt is a film designed for primary and lower secondary school grades. It tells briefly of our physiological need for salt, surveys the natural resources—sea water, rock salt and underground brine—and shows the method of large scale production from each. It concludes by showing some of the most important uses of salt itself, and demonstrates articles of daily use in whose manufacture salt plays a part.

Comment must be limited to a few of the questions that rise to the mind. Does, for example, a survey of this kind mean anything to a child of this age group? Children are completely personal in their outlook on life; salt here never becomes a reality in a personal sense. Are children interested in so much manufacturing detail? Does the model showing the method of salt evaporation convince better than a simple explanation of the principle using a familiar dish or pan? Will a child 'register' the fact that things such as glass need salt in their manufacture unless some explanation is given? Children want to know the why' about things. There is a barrage of questions in store for the teacher. And finally—the crucial test—does this film in fact show anything which the teacher could not equally well put over without it?

Annouia is for a different age group—the chemistry and general science classes of school certificate level. Basically it follows the same pattern. Beginning by reminding the class of laboratory methods of making ammonia, it passes to a short statement of its use in the home, for refrigeration and the manufacture of a number of essential products. The bulk of the film is then taken up by a detailed explanation of the Haber Bosch method for the manufacture of ammonia from air and water on a commercial scale.

This later part the film explains well with actuality and diagram. Had it been called 'The Manufacture of Ammonia' it could have been given full marks. But it is not, and so again there are questions: Do shots of refrigeration spell

ammonia? One short cross section diagram would have driven the point home. Does this recital of objects produced through the use of ammonia put its point over? Is manufacture really so important—except to the sponsor? This process does have to be learned, and the film is a help in explaining it, but in a general film the proportion of space given to it seems excessive.

Such reactions as these are coloured no doubt by the hopes aroused by their arrival of some new contribution to the urgent problems of visual education. If these are not fulfilled it must in fairness be added that these two films are much superior to most films of this type, and that with the limited range available today, teachers will find in them much that is useful. Technically both films are of high quality, a fact which explains the level of criticism.

Teaching notes which elaborate many of the points made in the films are being designed to accompany them.

Take Thou. Basic for Evans Medical Supplies in association with Film Centre.

Photography: Rod Baxter. Director: Kay Mander. Script: John Rhodes. Camera: A. Englander. Distribution: Publicity Department, Evans Medical Supplies. 25 mins.

Documentary has been prone to regard a 'tourof-the-works' as beneath serious considerationas veiled advertising. Yet the activities of a large business house can be fascinating to the outside observer, and moreover, by integrating the work of the individual into the group, can give meaning to his apparently routine job (as the GPO Film Unit has shown). Take Thou is, we hope, but the first of many such films which while being undoubtedly a 'tour-of-the-works' carry no advertising message. Here is surveyed in briefest outline the rise of the pharmaceutical industry, the preparation on a vast scale of herb extracts, of fine chemicals, of synthetic hormones, of animal extracts and sera, and all the other drugs which stack the shelves of our chemists' shops. But manufacture is only the first part of the work; these products must be tested for purity and activity as well as for possible harmful inclusions, and finally they must be packed and dispatched in quantities of a few milligrams or of many tons. The film moves fast through the many departments and processes, being concerned more with the broad picture than with any detailed procedures. For so superficial a survey the commentary is perhaps overloaded with technical terms, even for a specialized audience: the English language has some good simple synonyms for long technical words which would have been more in keeping with this record of the working man doing his job. Nevertheless Take Thou is a straightforward presentation, having much in common with Twenty-Four Square Miles, for the photography is completely subservient to the subject-matter, the lighting is unpretentious, and one notices a commendable absence of that beautification process which commonly precedes the arrival of a film unit. Here is a simple unpretentious film, which by direct demonstration rather than cinematic virtuosity portrays forcefully the widespread activities of just one British business organization.

\* The two starred reviews were written for DNL before the new Reviewing Panel had been formed.

### SCIENTIFIC FILM NEWS ON

# THE INTERNATIONAL PROSPECT

### By JOHN MADDISON

THE TRADITION that the fruits of research should be freely exchanged between the scientists of all nations is a long-established one. During the past century, this international traffic in ideas has played a vital role in the spectacular growth of our organized knowledge about the universe. Where scientific books, periodicals and records of proceedings are concerned, an efficient world wide system of interchange has been built up. But in the case of the cincma, this new instrument of research and communication, no such international mechanism of distribution exists.

There are, of course, reasons for this. Cinematography is only some fifty years old. Films are industrial products, and relatively costly. Trade restrictions and customs barriers prevent them from travelling easily across national frontiers. Yet the need for the freest and widest exchange of scientific films is urgent, if only on the ground of their potential value in raising levels of productivity in a period of almost universal impoverishment.

### UNESCO

The Scientific Film Association has from the beginning recognized this need. The promotion of the international use of the scientific film was put high among its aims. The end of the war and the creation of a Film Department at UNESCO brought the hope that the international importance of the scientific film might be more fully realized. Already by 1946, the Association's contacts with foreign countries were numerous, and in the summer of that year, it set up a special committee to handle its international relations. This committee was also meant to serve as a means of liaison between the Association and any national body the Ministry of Education might set up for co-operation with UNESCO.

### Preparatory Work

The Association's chief activity in this field during the past year has been its collaboration with the French Institut de Cinématographie Scientifique in the preparatory work towards creating an international scientific film organization. The French had for a long time done pioneer work by bringing together each year at their scientific film festivals the work of many countries. At the last of these in October, 1946, the Scientific Film Association delegation enjoyed the privilege of seeing the work of such experts as Comandon, Leclerc and Thévénard of France, Van der Horst of Holland, Hans Richter of Switzerland, and Iachine and Loukachevitch from the Soviet Union; as well as screening a number of outstanding British productions. More important perhaps than this, the British and the French engaged in conversations with colleagues from Czechoslovakia, Poland,

Sweden and America, at which William Farr, of UNESCO, attended as a sympathetic observer.

### Congress in the Autumn

It was evident at these meetings that the time had come to establish some sort of international organization to keep scientific film-makers and users throughout the world in permanent liaison with each other. The British and French undertook to organize a congress to inaugurate such a movement. It was to be held in Paris in the autumn of 1947. They agreed also to prepare a draft constitution to lay before this congress. The preparation of this document has naturally involved much labour and thought, and frequent consultations between London and Paris. In it, basic principles and certain urgent needs have, it is hoped, found practical expression. The contribution which science can make to human happiness and the part films can play in this, are given first importance. Among the aims proposed for the new organizations are the removal of barriers to the international exchange not only of scientific films, but also of the skill of film technicians, the experience of film users and the products of research into new optical and photographic techniques. The inaugural Congress will take place in Paris on October 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 1947; it will be followed immediately by an International Scientific Film Festival. At this festival, the screen time allotted to each nation is so arranged as to give an equal share to any nation which may wish to participate. By the time this article appears in print, invitations to the Congress and to the festival will have gone out above the signatures of Jean Painlevé, Director of the Institut de Cinématographie Scientifique and Basil Wright, President of our own Association, to appropriate bodies in all

### Other Activities

All this is but one aspect of the Association's work in the international field. Counsel has been given on the selection of British scientific films to be shown at a number of international festivals. Enquiries from abroad have been met out of the collective knowledge of the Association's Standing Committees in Industry, Medicine and Education. Films and film strips on biology, mathematics, astronomy, statistics and physics from the USA, Canada, China, Denmark, the Soviet Union and South Africa have been shown to members. Honour has been done to distinguished foreign visitors; to Pierre de Fonbrune, the eminent cinemicrographer from the Institut Pasteur (invited to Britain by the British Council from whose Science Department the Association has received valuable co-operation); to Jean Benoit-Lévy, head of the Film Department of UN; and to Vit Hejny, head of the

Czechoslovak School Films Department. At this latter occasion, during the Czech Festival in May, a Czech-British scientific film programme gave us the opportunity of seeing Dr Hejny's own film on educational psychology, and the films on ellipses and perabolas, made by Franz Kysela, who also took part in the discussions in Paris last October.

### The Daily Work

These meetings have underlined, in a pleasant fashion, the identity of interest between the scientists, teachers and cinematographers of different nations. But equally important, the Association feels, is the more humdrum day-today work of collecting data essential to its international purposes. At the request of UNESCO, details have been provided of the system of appraising and cataloguing films evolved here in Britain by the Association, and of the Association's Medical Committee's work on the use of microfilm for disseminating library information on films. On the suggestion of the Director of UNESCO'S Department of Mass Media, John Grierson (who takes a shrewd and lively interest in this as in so many other matters), the British Council made a verbatim record of the proceedings at the Association's March Conference on Films in Industry, so that its findings might be circulated to other countries. Throughout the year, the Association's international librarian, Denys Parsons, has continued to collect data about the scientific films abroad. A summary of the results of his labours is to be published in the near future. This is the document, relating to the work of thirty-three countries, to the interim version of which Michael Michaelis referred in this column in the June-July number of DNL.

Here in Britain, particularly in the growing ranks of the Scientific Film Society movement, there is a desire to see more frequently examples of film-making abroad. The requests received by the Association from other countries reveal an equal desire that British scientific films should be more readily available to them. The Paris Congress will seek to provide the blueprint for an organization through which these and other exchanges may be increased. In the meantime, the Association has set up a Working Party to realize a more limited aim. It will collect and list the titles of scientific films available through the diplomatic representatives in London of all foreign countries. In addition, it will seek to discover from the owners or sponsors of all films in the Association's Catalogue of Films of General Scientific Interest how best users abroad may have access to them. The co-operation of readers of DNL, possessing information of to value in this work, would be welcomed.

### CATALOGUE OF MOI & COI FILMS—6th SUPPLEMENT

(January 1st—December 31st, 1946) FILMS MADE BY THE MOI & COI

A General Films

Trailers

Colonial Film Unit

1. Monthly release films underlined

2. Names of people in brackets do not appear on credit titles

3. T = Mainly Theatrical Distribution
NT = Mainly Non-Theatrical Distribution
1 = For Specialized or Selected Audiences
OO - Primarily for Overseas Distribution
OOO Overseas Distribution Only
The abbreviation 'O' for 'Despatched Overseas' has been omitted, since almost all MOI films are exported.
4. Length is recorded in feet of 35 mm. gauge.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS—NUMBER OF FILMS PRODUCED BY THE MOLAND COL									
CATEGORY	1940A	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	TOTAL	
Five Minute	20	37	29	_				86	
Fifteen Minute	_	_	1	12	12	12		37	
Monthly Release		_		_	_	ARRANG .	1.3	13	
General 'T' Distribution	14	5	7	8	5	8	14	61	
General N.T. Distribution	23	7	35	21	28	39	26	179	
pecialized or Selected Audiences	6	12	24	27	13	12	33t	127	
lainly Overseas			12	7	6	2	4	31	
Vholly Overseas	3	10	18	39	15	6	3	94	
Trailers	8	15	34	46	51	37нлк	37м	228	
Total	74	86	160	160	130	116	130	856	
Colonial Film Unit	8	10	16в	30c	36	30FG	19	149	
Acquired 5- and 15-Minute Films	2	10	17	10	_	1D	_	31	

Includes 2 films for T release delivered in 1939.
Includes 4 16 mm. productions.
Includes 12 Empire at War productions.
I5-minute films.
Excludes 3 re-issues, includes 3 issues in Scotland only and 3 in England and Wales only.
Includes 5 16 mm. productions.

G Includes 9 'Empire at War' compilations.

Re-issue.
3 Issued in Scotland only.
Not issued.
Includes I film on 16 mm. Kodachrome only.
Includes 4 re-issues.

. Includes a 10 mm production										
	STATISTICAL ANALYSIS—FOOTAGE OF FILMS PRODUCED BY THE MOI AND COI									
CATEGORY	1940A	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	TOTAL		
Five Minute Fifteen Minute Monthly Release General T' Distribution General N.T. Distribution Specialized or Selected Audiences Mainly Overseas Wholly Overseas Trailers	13,791 — 16,673 23,545 4,109 — 3,100 1,600	25,113 — 9,228 7,809 10,280 — 11,093 3,000B	20,141 1,316  22,506 41,457 30,552 16,383 22,944 4,250	15,216 33,833 24,010 38,568 15,081 43,115 5,750c	16,041 17,524 39,527 18,713 5,908 17,307 5,500cg	14,832 31,165 55,216 17,850 6,179 8,413 4,625	12,622 30,478 32,618 54,245p 17,672 3,706 3,330MN	59,045 47,405 12,622 161,407 224,308 171,317 61,223 109,678 28,055		
TOTAL	62,818	66,604	159,519	175,613	120,565	138,280нлк	154,671	878,070		
Colonial Film Unit	11,919	7,836	13,600D	13,198E	17,844	33,107L	20,5690	118,073		
Acquired 5 and 15-Minute Films	1,135	6,657	11,353	1,312F	_	887	_	21,344		
		_								

Includes 3,130 feet of T releases delivered in 1939.

Average length 200 feet.

Average length 125 feet.

Average length 125 feet.

16 mm. productions calculated at equivalent 35 mm. footage.

Includes 12 'Empire at War' compilations.

Monthly release.

Excludes 3 re-issues and includes 3 issues in Scotland only, and 3 issues in England and Wales only.

Re-issued November 19th.
3 issued in Scotland only.
Not yet issued.
Includes 9 'British Empire at War' compilations.
Average length 90 feet.
Includes 360 feet re-issues.
Includes 2,425 feet of 16 mm. silent.
Includes 1 film made on 16 mm. Kodachrome.

GPO Lathonis a Problem

TITLE	DISTRI- BUTION	PRODUCTION UNIT	PRODUCER	DIRECTOR	RELEASE T	DATE NT	LENGTI- feet	1 REMARKS
After Six O'clock	T	Greenpark	Ralph Keene	Humphrey	16, 12 46	_	957	Shortened version of Good Neighbours, monthly release for December.
As Others See Us	I	Mealin Films	M. Hankinson	Swingler R. MacDougall	_	16,9 46	1,126	Training film for Treasury on how to interview the casual caller.
Australians in London, The	000	Crown	Alexander Shaw	Colin Dean		_	1,038	Special record of the Australian contingent's part in the Victory Parade.
Beginning of History, The		Crown	Basil Wright (Associate: Edgar Anstey)	Graham Wallace	-	29 10 46	4,289	The story of British life and agriculture from the earliest days up to the Roman invasion. Made for Ministry of Education.
Big Four, The	I	Larkins	W. Larkin		-	3 7 46	857	A Cartoon film made for the Ministry of Food.
Birds of the Village	NT	Films of Gt. Britain	Andrew Buchana (Associate: Edgar Anstey)	nAndrew Buchana	in —	28 8 46	1,659	Made for the Ministry of Agriculture to show that most small birds are friends of the farmer. Bird photography: Fre Hosking.
Bridge, The	NT	DATA	Donald Alexander	J. D. Chambers		4 10 46	3,500	A story of reconstruction in Yugo-slavia.
BDW (Diseases in Poultry)	I	Films of Gt. Britain		nAndrewBuchana	n	Not yet lixed	1,529	Made for Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, A film for farmers.
Britain Can Make It Series		_		_	_	_	_	A monthly film primarily made for dis- tribution in factories. Usually containing three items.
BCMI No. 6	NT	Films of Fact	Jack Holmes	_		3,7 46	913	Contains: (1) Change over airfield into farm; (2) Saliycocruleas—the Cricket Bat Willow; (3) Science at the Helm—Navigational Radar
BCM1 No. 2	NT	Films of Fact	Paul Rotha			28 2 46	943	Contains: (1) Works Uncle; (2) Bath- rooms off the Belt; (3) Mannequin Parade.
BCMI No. 3	NT	Films of Fact	Paul Rotha	-	-	4 4 46	880	Contains: (1) Aluminium Houses, (2) De-
BCMI No. 4	NT	Films of Fact	J. B. Holmes	_		8 5 46	930	sign in Industry; (3) Canadian Round Up. Contains: (1) German Reconstruction;
BCMI No. 5	NT	Films of Fact	J. B. Holmes	-		30 5 46	921	(2) Youth Hostels; (3) Plastic Shoes. Contains: (1) ARP; (2) Sunspots; (3)
BCMI No. 11 BCMI No. 7	NT NT	Films of Fact Films of Fact	J. B. Holmes Jack Holmes	3	=	26 11 46 22 7 46	917 963	Toys. (1) Ordnance Survey; (2) Bricks. (1) Mablethorpe Plan; (2) Plastics Again; (3) Borrow With Interest
BCMI No. 8	NT	Films of Fact	Jack Holmes	_		27 8 46	922	(1) Queens and Tramps; (2) Lgg Packing
BCM1 No. 9	NT	Films of Fact	Jack Holmes	-	~	28 9 46	936	(3) Rock Drills. (1) Tools for the job; (2) Up to standard,
BCM1 No. 10	NT	Films of Fact	Jack Holmes	_		25 10 46	959	(3) Two Men and a Girl. (1) I olding Boats; (2) Clock Works; (3)

BCMI No. 1	NT	Films of Fact	Jack Holmes	_	_	30,1/46	950	3 items are: (1) Admiralty Concrete Floating Dock; (2) Motion Study; (3)
BCMI No. 12	NT	Films of Fact	J. B. Holmes	-	_	10 12/46	938	War Artists' Exhibition. One Item only: Britain Can Make It Exhibition.
Casting in Steel at Wilson's Forge	I	Basic	R. K. Neilson- Baxter (Associate:	R. K. Neilson- Baxter	_	Not yet fixed	1,132	This silent film is part of the local study visual unit. Made for the Ministry of Education.
Children on Trial	T & NT	Crown	Edgar Anstey) Basil Wright	Jack Lee	1/8/46	_	5,562	A study of juvenile delinquents at
Cine-Panorama	1	Basic	R. K. Neilson- Baxter (Associate:	Kay Mander	_	Not yet fixed	388	approved schools for boys and girls. This silent film is part of the 'Local Study' visual unit. Made for the Ministry of Education.
Civil Engineering	1	Realist	Edgar Anstey) Alexander Shaw	and John	_	31/10/46	1,235	One of the Post-War Career Series. Made for the Ministry of Works and Labour.
Clean Farming	1	Campbell Harper	Alan Harper	Eldridge Alan Harper	_	10/8/46	1,486	Made for the Department of Agriculture for Scotland for farmers.
Coal Mining Today	I	New Realm	_	Edited by Sylvia Cummins	_	9 5 46	1,613	One of the Post-War Career Series, Made
Cotton Come Back	I	DATA	J. B. Holmes	Donald Alexander	_	2/10/46	2,302	for the Ministry of Fuel and Power and Ministry of Labour and National Service. One of the Post-War Career Series. Made for the Board of Trade and Ministry of Labour.
Critical Harvest	T & NT	New Realm	_	Edited by Sylvia	20/5/46	_	787	Made for the Ministry of Agriculture. An appeal for workers for the harvest.
Cyprus is an Island Defeated People, A	T & NT T	Greenpark Crown	R. Keene Basil Wright	Cummins R. Keene Humphrey Jennings	1/6/46 1/3/46	Ξ	3,053 1,693	Life in Cyprus today. The story of life and conditions and problems facing the German people and
Defeat Diphtheria, 1945	I	New Realm	_	Edited by Sylvia	-	23/5/46	720	the CCG. Spring, 1946. A re-edited version of <i>Defeat Diphtheria</i> , 1941, for the Ministry of Health.
Fair Rent	T & NT	DATA	Donald	Cummins Mary Beales	Not y		999	How Rent Tribunals work in Scotland.
Fight for Life	NT OO	Exploitation	Alexander —	Edited by Jim Mellor	— fixed	19/6/46	1,516	This is one of a series of films about Africa and shows something of the way
From the Rhine to Victory	00	British Paramount	_	Edited by	_	2/4/46	4,519	of life of the peoples of the Gold Coast.  A newsreel compilation of the events
From Italy to D Day	00	News British Movietone News	-	A. S. Graham Edited by Raymond Perrin	_	-	2,909	from the crossing of the Rhine to VE Day. A Newsreel compilation of the events from July 1943 to June, 1944, when the Allies closed in for the final assault on the
Furnace Practice Getting On With 1t	I T	CWS FU	George Wynn	George Wynn	19/8/46	25/6/46	2,740 996	fortress of Europe. Made for the Ministry of Fuel and Power. Monthly release for August. Compilation from items in <i>This is Britain</i> and <i>Britain</i>
Glen Is Ours, The	T & NT	Verity Films	_	H. Cass	Not yet	_	2,792	Can Make It Made for the Scottish Office. A story of
Good Neighbours	NT	Greenpark	Ralph Keene	Humphrey Swingler	fixed —	Not yet fixed	1,377	Local Government.  Made for the Scottish Office. A small community organize and form a Com-
How to Make Cakes	NT I	Films of Gt. Britain	Andrew	Andrew	_	25/2/46	991	munity Centre.  Instructional film made for the Ministry
How to Make Jam	NTI	Films of Gt. Britain	Buchanan Andrew	Buchanan Andrew	_	25/2/46	1,000	of Food.  Instructional film made for the Mniistry
How to Prepare Salads	NT I	Films of Gt. Britain	Buchanan Andrew	Buchanan Andrew	_	28/2/46	934	of Food. Instructional film made for the Ministry
Instruments of the Orchestra	T & NT	Crown	Buchanan Alexander Shaw	Buchanan Muir Mathieson	1/10/46	_	1,821	of Food.  Made for the Ministry of Education.  Answers the question, What is a Sym-
Institutional Domestic Service		Merlin	Michael Hankinson	Gilbert Gunn	_	25/11/46	1,411	phony Orchestra? Made for the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour. One of a film series
Hausa Village	T & NT	Taurus	_	Joan Duff	14/11/46	_	1,949	about jobs after the war. A day in the life of one of the villages of the Hausa people who live in N. Nigeria.
Home and School	NT	Crown	Alexander Shaw	Gerry Bryant	_	Not yet fixed	1,815	Made for Ministry of Education to encourage the growth of Parent Teacher Associations.
Houses in History	1	Seven League	(Associate: Paul Rotha)	H. M. Nieter	_	25/11/46	1,780	Made for the Ministry of Education. Changes in architecture between the 13th
House That Jack Built, The	T	Crown	Alexander Shaw	Graham Wallace	18/10/46		850	century and today. Part of Visual Unit. Monthly release for November. Made for the Ministry of Works. Boys from 17 counties who have left school and are apprenticed to builders working on
How to Cook Fish	NT 1	Films of Gt. Britain	Andrew	Andrew	_	25, 2,46	988	council houses. Made for the Ministry of Food.
1ndian Background	T & NT	New Realm	Buchanan —	Buchanan —	16/9/46	_	833	Compilation for India Office, Describing the gradual transition from the old
It Began on the Clyde	T & NT	Greenpark	R. Keene	Ken Annakin	18/2/46	_	1,412	methods of agriculture and industry. Made for the Department of Health for Scotland. Known as the Clyde Basin experiment. The utilization of the Emer-
It Might Be You	T & NT	Crown	Basil Wright	Michael Gordon	21/1/46	_	1,255	gency Service Hospitals to deal with cases of war fatigue in industry. Monthly release for January, 1946. A reminder to all road users to take more care and follow the rules of the Highway
Low Sugar Content, Jam Making	I	Films of Gt. Britain	Andrew	Andrew		Not yet	1,000	Code.  Made for the Ministries of Food and
Man One Family	00	Ealing Studios	Buchanan Sidney Cole	Buchanan Ivor Montagu	_	fixed 8/1/46	1,551	Education. An exposure of the fallacy of the German
Milk from Grange Hill Farm	1	Basic	R. K. Neilson	J. B. Napier	_	Not yet	1,043	race myth. This silent film is part of the 'Local Study'
Myra Hess	NT	Crown	Baxter (Assoc. Edgar Anstey) Basil Wright		_	fixed 2/1/46	864	Visual Unit. Made for the Ministry of Education. Playing the First Movement of Beethoven's
Modern Guide to Health	Т	Halas Batchetor	J. Halas	_	21/1/47	_	820	Sonata in F Minor, Op. 57 (Appassionata). Monthly release for January, 1947. Made for the Ministry of Health and Central Council for Health Education. (Cartoon
Near Home	I	Basic	R. K. Neilson- I		-	Not yet	2,224	film.) This film is part of the Ministry of Education Visual Unit on Local Studies.
North-East Corner	MT	Greenpark	Baxter (Assoc. Edgar Anstey) Ralph Keene J			Not yet	2,015	One of the Pattern of Britain scries.
Now It Can Be Told	T 00	RAF/FU re-edited by	(Associate: Edgar Anstey) E. Baird	E. Baird	fixed 7/2/47	fixed —	6,203	A film about the British and the Maquis.
Old Wines! To be	NIT	Exploitation				16:2146	600	English theatrical distribution of this film under the title of School for Danger.
Old Wives' Tales	NT	Ilalas Batchelor	J. Halas	_	_	15/3/46	698	Made for the Ministry of Health in col- laboration with the Central Council for Health Education. (Cartoon.)

Pacilic Hitch-hike	T & NY	Films of Fact	Paul Rotha	Peter Hennessy	-		1,271	Made for the Admiralty. A reporter is shown travelling across the Pacific by various methods with the Heet Mail
Penicillin in Medical Practice	I	Realist	John Taylor	Jane Massey	-	Not yet tixed	2,858	and life in an Aircraft-Carrier.  Made for the Ministry of Health, Available in 16 mm. Kodachrome only (Lootage reckoned in 35 min terms for running
Personnel Selection in the British Army (Report from Britain No.		Shell	Edgar Anstey (Associate; Basil Wright)	Geoffrey Bell		22 5 46	8,700	time.) For specialized audiences. A detailed study of the technique of officer selection.
Pool of Contentment	1	Public Relatio	nship Richard	Richard	***	4 11 46	1,265	Made for HM Treasury. A film for users
Portuguese Editors' Tour	000	Movietone	Massingham	Massingham	15 11 46	_	1,678	of a typing pool.  Special coverage of the Tour made for
Potato Growing	I	Films of Gt. B	ritain Andrew	Andrew		26 6 46	1,685	overseas distribution only Made for the Ministry of Agriculture. \
Potteries in the Gold Coast	NT	Exploitation	Buchanan	Buchanan		21/10/46		film for farmers. One of the series about life in the Gold
					_			Coast.
Railwaymen, The	I	Crown	Alexander Shaw	Graham Wallace	_	Not yet fixed	2,045	Made for the Ministry of Transport One of a film series about jobs.
Seabies, 1946	1	Merlin	_	R. Carruthers		Not yet fixed	2,220	Re-edited version of the him made in 1944 for the Ministry of Health.
Seed of Prosperity	NT	Campbell Har	er (Associate: Edgar Anstey)	Alan Harper	-	1,7,46	1,735	Made for the Department of Agriculture for Scotland. The story of Scotlish Seed
Shapiog the Future (long version)	I	Gryphon	Donald Taylor	_	_	6, 6, 46	1,352	Potatoes. One of the post-war career series. Presenting conditions and prospects in the
Shaping the Future (short version)	T	Gryphon	Donald Taylor		22/4/46	_	975	A shortened version of the above film
Stomach Worms in Sheep	I	Films of Gt. B	ritain Andrew	Andrew	_	21 8,46	1,750	Made for the Ministry of Agriculture. A
Story of Omolo	NT	Crown	Buchanan Basil Wright	Buchanan —	_	26 6 46	779	film for farmers.  A Kenya villager learns the scientific principles of agriculture at Bukura Col-
Too from Nyasaland	NT	Crown	Roeil Wright	Kingston Davies		10 0 16	797	lege. Story of tea-growing in East Africa and
Tea from Nyasaland			Basil Wright	Kingston-Davies		19 9 46		its shipment to England.
Teaching	I	Merlin	Michael Hankinson	Roger MacDougall	_	14'11 46		One of the post-war career series. Pro- duced for Ministry of Education.
Telephone Cable Jointing	I	Films of Gt. B	Buchanan	Andrew Buchanan	_	Not yet fixed	1,912	Post Office training film No. 1.
This Is China	T	Verity	Julian Wintle	-	22:7 46	-	775	Monthly release for July. (Compilation.) Tells of China's old age struggle for free- dom—her long fight against the Japanese
Town Meeting of the World	T	Crown	Basil Wright	Graham Wallace	18, 3/46	_	1,046	and her plans for reconstruction.  Monthly release for March. Based on extracts taken from recordings of Mr Attlee's opening speech at the first session of the General Assembly of the United
Turn It Out	T	Greenpark	Ken Annakin	Ken Annakin	21/10/46		913	Nations.  Made for the PM's Office. Monthly release for October. Intended to show the present production position to people in Britain.
Tweoty-Four Square Miles	1	Basic	R. K. Neilson-	K. Mander	_	21/11/46	3,763	An analysis of life in the country in this
Typing Technique	I	Public Relation	Baxter nship R. Massingham	M. Law		30 9 46	2,123	Made for HM Treasury. A training film
This Is Britain Series	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	This series is primarily intended for dis-
								tribution overseas and theatrical home. Each issue usually contains three items.
TIB No. 6	OO T	Merlin	Michael Hankinson		Not yet fixed	_	1,031	Contains: (1) Cambridge Auto-sexing breeds of poultry; (2) Photo-elastic Technique in industrial research; (3) Sad-
TIB No. 7	00 T	Merlin	Michael Hankinson	_	Not yet fixed	_	1,100	ler's Wells Ballet School. (1) Automatic ticket machines on the LPTB; (2) Open-cast Coal; (3) Re-stocking the Thames.
TIB No. 8	00 T	Merlin	Michael Hankinson	_	Not yet fixed		1,037	(1) Navigational Radar; (2) Folding boats; (3) Research in Wireworm control.
TIB No. 9	OO T	Merlin	Michael Hankinson	_	Not yet fixed	_	964	(1) Safety Precautions in London's Omni- bus Service; (2) New Designs in Agri- cultural Machinery; (3) Asdic for the
TIB No. 10	00 T	Merlin	Michael	_	Not yet	_	1,063	Herring Fleet. (1) Tugs; (2) Helidon; (3) Furs.
Way From Germany	T	Crown	Hankinson Basil Wright		fixed	_	1,003	The story of the problem of displaced
								persons. Compilation by Terry Trench; monthly release for June.
West Alrica Was There	000	Movietone Ne	*S —		_	15,3 46	990	Specially made for distribution in West Africa showing the part their troops played in the war.
Wioter Milk	I	World Wide	James Carr	Clifford Dyment		13 9 46	1,478	Made for the Ministry of Agriculture. A film for farmers on the advantage of planning for winter milk production
Worker and Warfront No. 18	NT	Films of Fact	Paul Rotha	_	_	5 1 46	992	Last issue of this monthly magazine for factories. Superseded by Britain Can
Your Children and You	1	Realist	Alexander Shaw and John Taylo		-	11 9 46	2,567	Make It.  Made for the Ministry of Health Intended to help parents of the under tives.
TITLE	PRODUCT	ION UNIT	DIRECTOR	GOVERNMEN	NT DEPT.	_	RELEASI	DATE NOTES
Briquette Making	Film Trader	s I	Iollering	Ministry of Fuel	and Power		January 1	7th
Diphtheria No. 6 Influenza Spare the Hot Water Family Allowances Eastern Mail Call Domestic Workers Only Good News Staggered Holidays Blood Banks Diphtheria No. 7 Increase the Harvest Come Back Alive Hospital Car Service Bags and Bones Agricultural Holiday Camps Odd Ode 'C' Women's Land Army Export or Die Employment of Disabled Persons	Concanen Public Relat Merton Parl Film Trader Merton Parl Concanen Concanen Concanen Concanen Hublic Relat Crown Brunner Llo Concanen Anglo-Scott Haias Batch Concanen	ionship F K S I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I	Derrick de Marney L. Massingham L. T. Dinsdale follering L. Rogers Derrick de Marney D. de Marney D. de Marney D. de Marney L. Lloyd Derrick de Marney L. Squire L. Massingham Fora Dawson L. Lloyd L. Massingham Derrick de Marney L. Squire L. Squire L. Squire L. Halas Derrick de Marney L. Squire L. Halas Derrick de Marney L. O. de Marney D. O. de Marney	Ministry of Healt Ministry of Healt Ministry of Fuel Ministry of Fuel Ministry of Natic War Office Ministry of Labo Ministry of Healt Ministry of Healt Ministry of Trans Ministry of Trans Ministry of Supp Ministry of Supp Ministry of Supp Ministry of Supp Ministry of Supp Ministry of Trans Ministry of Supp Ministry of Agric Ministry of Agric Board of Trade Ministry of Labo	th and Power on all Insura ur ur th the culture and sport the live ulture & 1 i sport ulture & 1 i ur ur wr	I ishcries	January 3 February February March 1st March 1st March 11t April 25th May 2nd May 13th May 20th May 27th June 13th June 18th July 1st July 1st July 1st July 1st August 4st August 4st August 4st August 4st August 15	13th 25th th Re-issue
Brickmakers Up the Potatoes Join the Army Odd Ode 'B' Diphtheria 8 Per Ardua	Elwiss Anglo-Scott Larkins Concanen Concanen Crown	V E	Elwiss A. Squire V. Larkin Derrick de Marney D. de Marney Soel Arthur	Ministry of Labo Ministry of Agric War Office M nistry of Tran- Ministry of Healt Air Ministry	ur ulture & 1: sport	isheries	August 19 August 26 August 29 September September September	th th 5th Distributed by Pathe only 9th

Resettlement Advice Service Old Age Insurance Who'll Help the Hospitals Join the Navy Watch the Fuel Watcher Paper Publicity RAF Post Haste Highway Code King's Men Keys of Heaven

Merton Park Merlin Merlin Merlin
Concanen
Elwiss
Crown
Concanen
Public Relationship
Concanen
Larkins
Halas Batchelor

DISTRIBUTION

TITLE

Max Munden
A. H. Luff
A. H. Luff
Derrick de Marney
Elwiss
Gerry Bryant
Derrick de Marney
R. Massingham
D. de Marney
W. Larkin
J. Ilalas

Ministry of Labour Ministry of National Insurance Ministry of Labour Admiralty Ministry of Fuel and Power Board of Trade Air Ministry GPO Ministry of Transport War Office PM's Office

September 26th October 3rd October 10th November 4th November 21st November 25th December 6th December 9th December 23rd

LENGTH

Re-issue.

Re-issue.

Re-issue.

REMARKS

COLO	NIA	$\mathbf{L}$ $\mathbf{F}$	ILM	U	N	ľ	Γ

TITLE	LENGTH feet	REMARKS	TITLE	LENGTH feet	REMARKS
Colonial Cine-Magazine No. 4	994	Sound. Contains three items: (1) London. University Football Match.	On Patrol	300	Silent. In 16 mm. only. The story of the capture of a thief by a local African policeman.
		(2) London. Colonial Film unit leaves for West Africa. (3) Leather workers in Accra.	Silver Jubilee of the Alake of Abeokuta	67 <i>5</i> 937	Sound. The Alake's celebrations in Abeokuta, Nigeria.
Colonial Cine-Magazine No. 5	930	(1) London. Colonial Athletes. (2) London. Model Engineering.	Swollen Shoot		Silent. In 16 mm. Kodachrome. This film was made to assist the campaign against the Swollen Shoot disease in Cocoa.
		(3) Gold Coast, Infant Welfare Clinic.	Teddy Bears	284	Sound. The film was edited from material shot in Australia showing young bears at
Deck Chair	348	Sound. Silent. In 16 mm. only. A man's struggle with a recalcitrant deck chair.	Victory March, West Africa	1,866	play.  Sound. Version of Victory Parade with the activities of the West Africans in more
English Village	2,592	Sound. An African's tour of a village.			detail.
Fight Tuherculosis in the Home	2,700	Sound. A simple film to show how by sensible conduct and precautionary meas-	Victory March, East Africa	998	Sound. As above, but dealing in this case with East Africa.
		ures the disease may be prevented from spreading. The film was produced in West	Victory March, Middle East	985	Sound. As above, but dealing with Middle East.
		Africa,	Victory Parade	1,982	Sound. Colonial troops arrive for the
Home to West Africa	602	Sound. The return of African troops to their homes in Nigeria and Gold Coast.			Victory Parade—are seen in camp—at a tea party at the Colonial Office—at the Derby—in Edinburgh—in London and
Keepers of the Peace	480	Silent. In 16 mm. only. Made in Northern Rhodesia, this film shows the training of African Police there.	Victory March, Far East	900	in the March Past in the Mall.  Sound. Dealing with contingent from the Far East.
Local Native Councils	360	Silent. In 16 mm, only. Showing the public services provided by the Local Native Councils.	Weaving in Togaland Welcome Home	1,930 706	Sound, Sound. The return of African troops to Gold Coast.

### FILMS ACQUIRED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

PRODUCTION UNIT

			feet	
	FILMS A	CQUIRED FROM THE BRITISH COUNCIL		
Cambridge			2,245	
Each for All	_	Verity Films Directed: Montgomery Tully	936	
English Criminal Justice	_	Everyman, Produced: Lewis Frank Wallace. Directed: Richard Massingham Verity Films. Directed: Montgomery Tully Greenpark. Produced: Ralph Keene. Directed: Ken Annakin Greenpark. Produced: Ralph Keene. Directed: Peter Price Technique. Directed: Ronald Riley World Wide. Produced, Directed: James Carr Merlin Films. Produced: Michael Hankinson. Directed: Gilbert Gunn Merton Patk Production. Directed: James E. Rogers Merlin Films. Produced: Michael Hankinson Merlin Films. Produced: Michael Hankinson Verity Films. Produced: Michael Hankinson Verity Films. Produced: Reg. Groves. Directed: Reg. Groves Merton Park Production. Directed: H. Purcell Verity Films. Produced: State Produced: Michael Hankinson Niected: Henry Cass	1,939	
Farmer's Boy		Georgia Reduced, Ralph Venne, Directed, Rotar Price	1,404	
General Election		Tashelana Disated Basel Bland	1,838	
Papworth Village Scttlement		Wald Wide Bradund Diseased James Com	1,815	
Routine Job	_	World Wide. Produced, Directed: James Carr		
St Daul's Cathodeal	-	Merlin Flims. Produced: Michael Hankinson. Directed: Gilbert Gunn	2,049	
St Paul's Cathedral	_	Merton Park Production. Directed: James E. Rogers	1,353	
This Is Britain No. 1	_	Merlin Films, Produced: Michael Hankinson	835	
This Is Britain No. 2	_	Merlin Films. Produced: Michael Hankinson	1,043	
Great Game		Verity Films, Produced: Reg. Groves, Directed: Reg. Groves	2,738	
Learning to Live	00	Merton Park Production, Directed: H. Purcell	1,323	
Macbetli	00	Verity Films. Produced: Sydney Box. Directed: Henry Cass	1,456	
New Mine		GB Instructional	1,589	
Picture Paper	_	Horizon Film Unit, Directed: Max Munden	1,781	
This Is Britain No. 3	T 00	Mcrlin Films, Produced: Michael Hankinson	966	
This Is Britain No. 4	T 00	Media Films, Floduced; Michael Hankinson	990	
This Is Britain No. 5	1 00	Merlin Films. Produced: Michael Hankinson		
	1 00	Merlin Films, Produced: Michael Hankinson	989	
We of the West Riding		Greenpark, Produced: Ralph Keene, Directed: Ken Annakin	2,086	
	FILMS AC	QUIRED FROM THE AIR MINISTRY		
Now It Can Be Told (long version	on) OO	RAF FU, Produced, Directed: E. Baird	8,031	
	FILMS AC	Merlin Films. Froduced: Michael Hankinson Merlin Films. Produced: Michael Hankinson Greenpark. Produced: Ralph Keene. Directed: Ken Annakin CUIRED FROM THE AIR MINISTRY RAF, FU. Produced, Directed: E. Baird CUIRED FROM THE WAR OFFICE		
Palestine Police	1	Produced by No. 1 Army Film and Photographic Unit	1.627	One of the post-war career series.
Driver Wanted	i	Verity Films	2,112	One of the post-war career series.
Engineering in War and Peace	i	AKS	2,015	one of the post har curver series.
Food Manufacture	i	World Wide (Graham Cutts)	2,495	
Hospital Team	1		2,440	
Town and Country Planuing	1 7	Verity	950	O C-1 1 DO1 1
Town and Country Flamming	FILLE	National Interest Productions  QUIRED FROM THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA	920	One of the ABCA magazines
61 .6	FILMS AC	QUIRED FROM THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA		
Cattle Country	NT	Educational Unit	_	
Canadian Wheat Story	NT	Educational Unit	_	
Out of the Ruins	NT	Nicholas Read	1,056	Made in conjunction with UNRRA
Peace Builders	NT	_	942	
Music in the Wind	NT		900	
This Is Our Canada	NT		1,870	
Trees that Reach the Sky	NT	namely.	1,070	
area that benefit the Day		COLUMN TRANSPORTATION FILMS OF INDIA		
District Officer	NT AU	CQUIRED FROM INFORMATION FILMS OF INDIA	1,152	
Our Northern Consins	IN I	Producer: Ezra Mir. Director: K. Villiers Producer: Ezra Mir. Director: Roop K. Shorey Producer: Ezra Mir. Director: K. Subrahmanyam ANEOUS FILMS ACQUIRED		
Palmyrah	NI	Producer: Ezra Mir. Director: Roop K. Shorey	1,020	
ramyran	NI	Producer: Ezra Mir. Director: K, Subrahmanyam	840	
D 11397 1	MISCELLA	ANEOUS FILMS ACQUIRED		
Duckbill Loader	1	British Movietone News	4,480	Acquired from the Ministry of Fuel of
			1,792	Power.
			16 mm.	Silent 16 mm. only.
Soil Nutrients	I	Realist Film Unit, Directed by Brian Smith	2,000	Acquired from ICI
There's a Future In It	î	World Wide. Directed by Mary Francis	2,022	Acquired from the Cotton Board.
National Capital	NT	Commonwealth of Australia Production	1,732	Acquired from the Australian Departm
the state of the s	14.1	Commonwealth of Australia Production	1,732	
Can We Be Rich?	NITT	ET D. I. C. TI. D C. TI. I.	1.212	of Information.
The Hurdler	NT	Film Producers Guild. Director: Cecil Musk	1.312	
the flurdler	l l	<del>-</del>	1,000	Acquired for the Ministry of Educati
V1 12 27 2				The John Bett's Sportsmen All Series
The Runner No. 1	1	-	1,000	do. do. do.
The Runner No. 2	1	_	1,000	do. do. do.
The Runner No. 3	I	_	1,000	do. do. do.
high and Long Jump	1	_	1,000	do. do. do.
High and Long Jump Javelin Thrower and Pole Vaulto	er i		1.000	do. do. do.
Discus and Hammer Thrower	1		1,000	
The Boxer	1			
The Walker	1	_	1,000	do. do. do.
	1	_	000.1	do. do. do.
The Rower	1	_	1,000	do. do. do.
The Sportswoman		_	1,000	do. do. do.
The Yachtsman Putting the Shot	1	_	1,000	do. do. do.
			1,000	do. do. do.

IF THE FILM IS TO APPEAL TO THE CHILD
WE MUST KNOW WHAT THE CHILD LIKES—
MAYBE WE CAN LEARN SOMETHING FROM THIS ARTICLE

# ON CHILDREN'S FILM APPRAISAL

By

# **ELLIOTT JAQUES**

OF THE TAVISTOCK INSTITUTE OF HUMAN RELATIONS

LAST MONTH's issue of DNL contained a review of three children's Road Safety films—Puddle Muddle Riddle, Playing in the Road, and the Ballad of the Battered Bicycle—made by the Petroleum Films Bureau. The same issue carried a brief description of an experiment in getting the reactions of school children to these films. The children's reactions were just the reverse of the reviewer's, indicating the discrepancy which often exists between what an adult thinks a child will like and what the child really likes. In making children's films, however, it is the child's view that counts. How are we to assess this? Perhaps the tentative results from this film appraisal project may be suggestive.

### Methods of Testing

The appraisal techniques used were described in some detail in the previous article in DNL. Briefly these were to have small groups of children carry out certain spontaneous activities before and after each film. One group did chalk drawings, another group made up stories, another group made up games. Then, a day later, all of the children wrote short essays about the films.

The notion behind the use of these techniques was that if audience reaction research is to be meaningful it must tap some of the underlying attitudes of the audience as well as the more conscious reactions obtainable by essays and questionnaires. The drawings, story-telling and play techniques were therefore selected to provide an opportunity for spontaneous reactions to emerge in their full richness.

### Results

The results demonstrated that the essays did give a useful rank ordering of the films. There was, however, a good deal of repetitious material in them, and a tendency to tell what the children felt their teachers would expect. Scoring and evaluating these essays was a time-consuming and laborious task in relation to the amount of material available from them.

Of the spontaneous techniques the play-groups turned out to be by far the most useful. What in faet happened in these groups was that the children very readily played out on their own initiative various characters and incidents in the films. Observation and proper interpretation of the content of these games gave a significant picture of the kind of impact which the films had made. For example, certain incidents and characters were taken seriously and played out enthusiastically, others were mimicked and caricatured and debunked.

### Significant Omission

As one good illustration of this the case of the final sequence in Puddle Muddle Riddle can be cited. In the film, after an amusing fantasy portrayal of what would happen if there were no satisfactory traffic regulations the scene changes rapidly and shows a group of what the film calls 'sensible people' sitting round a committee room explaining to the children why our own traffic rules should be obeyed. This sequence was significantly omitted from the children's spontaneous play. When it was suggested that this scene might be played out the 'sensible people' were mercilessly lampooned. 'Sensible' was defined as meaning dull, and the children not involved in caricaturing the 'sensible people', joined in the fun by gibing at those who were.

### Different Schools

The films were shown in three different schools, and the reactions of the children in the different schools varied considerably. In one where the children were allowed a good deal of freedom and the relationship with adult teachers was secure there was much fuller enjoyment and freer criticism of the films than in the school where the relationship with the teachers was based more on fear of discipline. The children from the freer school atmosphere resented strict adults in the films far more than the other children who felt that strict adults 'must be right.'

Minor errors which would be missed by adults were deftly picked out by the children. For example, it was pointed out in one of the films where a motor car nearly ran over a child, that it was not the child's fault at all but the driver's because he was driving too near the centre of the road. Similarly, things which were never intended were easily read into the films. Some children, for example, suggested that the films taught new ways of doing tricks on a bicycle and of playing games in the road.

### Future Script-Writers

The children had a wealth of ideas for film stories on road safety which emerged in the story-telling test, and made highly constructive criticisms and suggestions. The teachers also had important suggestions to make, and it was clear that they resented somewhat the idea that films for schools should be made without reference to those who would have to use them.

Child characters were liked in the films, as were adults who played with the children. On the other hand strict, or even serious or sensible adults seemed to stir up rather deep-seated anxieties and these incidents and scenes in the films were deeply repressed.

These reactions of children to these Road Safety films—the taking-up of incorrect details, the differences in interpretation from those intended, criticisms of weaknesses in the films, the excellent ideas and constructive suggestions—all seem to indicate a need for the consideration of audience reaction research as an organic part of the process of film production, based on the notion of allowing consumer participation from the very beginning. In the case of teaching films for children this would involve opportunity for face to face contact between those making the films and groups of teachers and children, at all stages of production—treatment, script, shooting and cutting.

Such producer-consumer collaboration would guarantee greater consumer satisfaction with the end product, and provide an endless source of stimulation and enthusiasm for film-makers.

The appraisal work referred to was carried out under the auspices of PFB by a team composed of the author, M. Silberman, H. Phillipson, W. E. Moore and H. Marven from the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, and D. Boulting and G. Bennell from Film Centre.

# FIRST INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF DOCUMENTARY FILMS

AT EDINBURGH

Aug 31st-Sept 7th, 1947

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Sunday, Sept 7th - 2.30 and 7.15

Admission 2s, 3s, and 5s

### **GUILD THEATRE - FILM HOUSE**

Monday-Saturday, Sept 1st 6th 2.30 and 8

Admission 2s 6d

# THE FIRST OF A SERIES ON FILM FACILITIES IN THE PROVINCES

# No 1—MANCHESTER

### By MERVYN REEVES

MANCHESTER enjoys something of reputation in cultural matters, notably music and the drama. This is a brief account of what it is doing for the art which is little older than its outer suburbs.

The Kinematograph Year Book lists 133 cinemas in Manchester and its contiguous boroughs, Salford and Stretford. This figure must suffice—although one notices the omission of at least two 'palaces' where important films may be caught on the point of deserting the city's repertoire. Of the 133, twenty-four are owned by the three main circuits, and a number of the remainder by smaller locally-owned circuits. Total seating capacity may be estimated at 100,000, roughly one seat for every ten persons. Birmingham and Merseyside, two areas with comparable populations, are recorded as having 102 and 106 cinemas respectively, which suggests a relatively heavy concentration in Manchester. We certainly feel no shortage of the conventional type of picture house; the lack is one of enterprise in programme policy.

### No Stravinsky!

As elsewhere, the routine commercial feature makes its much-heralded tour of the city's cinemas, except for occasional commercial discords like the early Orson Welles films, which sneaked away; nor were we allowed to see the Stravinsky sequence in Fantasia! Apart from the central circuit cinemas and their suburban satellites, double-feature programmes are uncommon. Most of the suburban cinemas run a single feature and 'full supporting programme'—the news and one or two shorts. The last are often chosen as a contribution to neither quota nor culture. In fact, it seems, they are frequently not deliberately chosen at all but simply thrown in as a prelude to the feature. And although the results are rarely downright offensive, it is surprising that the opportunity to practise the art of programme building and demonstrate the versatility of the film medium, should be so widely ignored. The banality of supporting programmes is not, of course, peculiar to Manchester, but one could have hoped that the city's one specialized cinema would bear fruit elsewhere in the locality.

For the 'Tatler Theatre', over many years, has exhibited almost every factual film of merit, providing the subject matter has had a reasonably wide appeal. Only one type of film, I'm told, is barred—the ones which deem it necessary to underline, verbally, the moral of a film, catch you by the ears, and adopt a coercive attitude!

### Local restrictions

This enterprise apart, we have no cinema which can justly be called progressive. To date, there are no regular showings of Continental films and no repertory cinemas worthy of the name. Nowhere, that is, where the work of people like

Reed, Donskoi, Carné, Ford, Rotha, Eldridgeand your favourite comedian-is consistently given precedence over that of the industry's less talented personalities. So far, commerce has not seen fit to fulfil this need; but it is clearly a provision of the greatest educational and cultural importance and, incidentally, an essential complement to the work of the Arts Council in other fields. We hope that the City Corporation may feel its responsibilities in the matter. Although quick to use the film as a means of encouraging civic consciousness (they commissioned Rotha's A City Speaks), the Corporation has been more timid in its attitude towards the wider potentialities of films in the community. There was, for example, the regrettable and unprecedented restriction imposed last year upon the exhibition of all 35-mm films, and any 16-mm films of more than 2,400 ft., in the Corporation's own Central Library Theatre. Thus the civic film itself is excluded; and we can only hope that this measure will prove to be an isolated concession to those who persist in estimating cinema exclusively by to-day's box-office returns. As for the feared competition which inspired the restriction—the theatre holds less than one-half of one per cent of the city's total population.

### Film Societies

The locality has been fortunate in the work of its voluntary societies. The oldest of these is the Manchester and Salford Film Society, successor to the Salford Workers' Film Society, founded in 1930. As England's first exhibiting society it was inadvertently assisted by the banning of *Storm Over Asia* early in its career, and over a period of seventeen years it has shown 500 noteworthy films. Membership now stands at 450, and its activities include lectures and discussions in addition to standard film shows held on Sunday afternoons in the winter months. Manchester owes a lot to this pioneering Society and particularly to Reg Cordwell, its secretary for many years.

The Manchester Film Institute Society, inaugurated in 1934, has done similar work. For a period during the war it joined forces with the Manchester and Salford Society, both resuming separate operations in 1943. At that time the Film Institute Society had 124 members; it now has 1,150 and holds two performances of each monthly programme during the winter season, on a week-night—thanks to a sympathetic cinema schools group, about to be revived, and during recent years it has co-operated with the Extra-Mural Department of Manchester University in arranging a number of lectures on various aspects of the cinema.

These two societies between them have endeavoured to give every available film of artistic, social, or experimental interest at least one showing in Manchester, with frequent revivals of the established classics. They are entitled to much of the credit for the reported proposal to devote one of the principal commercial cinemas in the city to Continental films.

### Scientifie Film Society

The most recently formed organization is the Manchester Scientific Film Society, dating from 1945. Rapid progress has been made and the membership is now 600. Half are school members for whom special films are provided. Demand for attendance at the junior section is so great that only a small proportion can be accommodated at present, and the Society is proposing to tour the programmes next season in order to reach the wider audience. Programmes lasting two hours (1½ hours for the juniors) have hitherto consisted of an assortment of scientific films, with informed commentary upon the subject-matter of at least one film. The success of these commentaries suggests that it will shortly be possible to devote a whole programme to one theme, and use the film increasingly as a means of provoking discussion.

### Production

On the amateur production side we have the Manchester Film Society, which suspended activity during the war after 16 years of excellent work; its film *Miracles Still Happen* (1935), commemorating the centenary of the Manchester Children's Hospital, was the first amateur 35-mm sound film.

### Film and Education

Finally there are the scholastic bodies, the Teachers' Screen Circle, and a number of school visual aid groups; the latter are spreading rapidly, as are film societies, throughout South Lancashire. The prolificacy of film groups here is eloquent enough. It is no longer simply a question of stimulating an interest in film but one of supplying the many growing points with worthy material and authoritative guidance.

Now that public education in this country is likely to be the most rewarding form of security in the atomic age, it is urgent that the film should make its full contribution—inside and outside the commercial cinema. Some would like to believe that, in Manchester, with the co-operation of the various film societies, and adult education bodies, the valuable assistance of the COI Regional Film Office, and—dare one hope—the sympathetic ear of the trade, we might be able to set the pace for this task. The area is sufficiently compact to avoid dissipation of effort and yet populous and varied enough to constitute a fair test of the power which is believed to lie in visual education.

From Pinewood-

# THE FLITTING OF CROWN

-To Beaconsfield

A FEW months ago the Crown Film Unit migrated from the gaudy atmosphere of Pinewood to the more bucolic Beaconsfield.

The move was made with all that circumspect realism for which documentary film makers are so noted. First things first, and five experienced persons from the Unit were sent forth into Beaconsfield to take the lie of the land, to sift and sample all the possible premises and to choose one which would satisfy all the Unit's various capacities. Several places were recommended, but one by one, after very close study, they were pronounced unsuitable. This was too big, that was too palatial. Until at last, when several days of unceasing application had produced no satisfaction and all seemed lost, a diminutive, ancient, amiable place was found: by name, THE OLD HARE.

The basic problem solved, there was little else to worry about. As far as the studio was concerned, we had all seen the plans-nothing flamboyant but very workmanlike, homely. A stage of small but decorous dimensions, theatres, canteen, vaults, offices and the usual officeseverything was there, on the plan. Anything else we wanted we had only to ring up the appropriate Government department, the Ministry of Works or the Ministry of Supply or the Central Office of Information or the Treasury and—well, in twelve months we have already got a most wonderful road. It does not quite run from the gate to the doorstep, because the bit by the gate is not finished and we have not got a doorstep yet. When in a few weeks' time the Ministerial cars sweep over its clean, smooth concrete, the civil servants will have a decided feeling (until they get to the end of the road) that they are getting somewhere.

But, in point of fact, the Crown film unit when it left Pinewood got nowhere but into a wilderness. There is much, on the other hand, in this situation of having no studio, not even an outside lot, to brighten the eyes of the older (but never ageing) documentarians. There are many who think that even the Blackheath studio, small as it was, was a lapse from purity; to them the idea of Pinewood, with its five vast stages, was anathema. To them, the best documentary films were made, and will always be made by a man and a dog and a Newman Sinclair.

That is very much the situation in which Crown finds itself now. Wistful directors look out of the Beaconsfield windows and wonder whether they could lay tracks along the concrete road and shoot at night and then post synch, in order to get that long trolley shot which is so essential to the script, and which would be so simple if only they were still at Pinewood. Then someone suggests soundproofing the paint shop which is twelve feet high and roughly the size of a large drawing-room. If that were done, we wouldn't have to post synch, but then again, though there would probably be room for the camera, there certainly would not be room for the blimp. Then someone really bright suggests acrimoniously that if So-and-so must have that tracking shot, why not turn it into a panning shot, build the set in five-foot sections, shoot in the lavatory and then join all the bits together? And of course, anyone who opposes any suggestion whatsoever, no matter how inane, is looked upon as a rank saboteur.

So this state of studiolessness may turn out to be all for the best. It may be embittering, just at the moment, to think that we were able to shut ourselves away in a large studio in order to photograph a world war, and now, when we are asked to photograph nothing more concrete than the Future or Plans for this and that, there is no studio space in which to fake anything—but in the end, who knows, the effect of these difficulties may be most salutary. Crities not manually engaged in the arts insist that the best art is turned out by biting off more than you can chew, by cracking the hardest nuts. It may be so.

Perhaps doeumentarians, by facing appalling difficulties again, will learn to face the facts of life, too. Perhaps we shall be so hard put to it to fake, lie and cheat, that we shall resign ourselves to telling the truth for a change. Since circumstances have decided that we cannot go on in the old way we *could* make up our minds to have a clean sweep of all the junk which has accumulated round the word 'documentary'.

No more jovial pub seenes. No more honest workmen pushing back their cloth caps to reveal an honest forehead. No more rugged chauffeurs of the sky leaning over the clouds, their eyes as innocent as the filtered clouds themselves. No more affectionate, kindly, unquarrelling British families. In fact, no more of the documentary clich's types. They are all so damned *nice*.

What a set of films we could make, without a stage, without settings, without a crane, about real people—normal people who are the normal admixture of pleasantness and unpleasantness, laziness and industry, crookedness and honesty, superstition and scepticism.

In spite of the Central Office of Information's well-known passion for the truth at all costs, we, as proud documentary film-makers, would rather tell a varnished lie. But if we don't get our studio quickly, we may have to fall obediently into line with official wishes and tell, in a new sort of film, the unvarnished truth.

### HAYES SCIENTIFIC FILM SOCIETY

A REPORT received from this film society says that monthly shows are now given to audiences of about 110. They held an 'audience reaction' test at the April show in which the viewers were asked to rate the films as 'excellent', 'good', 'fair' or 'poor'. Shell Film Unit's Approach to Science topped the list with 51 per cent 'excellent' and 48 per cent 'good'. Other films with high ratings were Stairway to Heaven (on elementary astronomy) and Drawings that Walk and Talk (a composite history of the eartoon).

### NORTHERN COUNTIES CHILDREN'S CINEMA COUNCIL

THE NCCCC have held their third annual general meeting. They find that their experimental Junior Club has been a success but they stress the need for more satisfying films. Treasure Island and Tawny Pippet were very popular and there is an assured demand for films of any of the children's 'classics'.

The report makes a complaint about the impossibility of guaranteeing the complete success of any educational film show—faulty projectors, bad prints, damaged films, arbitrary vetos between library and exhibitors—all these combine to make it most doubtful if any particular film will be able to be shown at the point at which it is most necessary in any given 'teaching' project.

The NCCCC also shows French films for grammar school pupils, scientific films, films on the arts, and films for educationalists. They reach a wide audience and are doing a worth-while job.

# ADULT EDUCATION AT STOKE HOUSE

A NEW adult college is opening at Stoke House, Stoke Hammond, Bletchley, Bucks, in August. This is a private venture in continued education and has no support from the local authority except in good wishes. The initiative has come entirely from Mr Noel Heath, who as Wing Commander inspecting a number of RAF educational schemes in this country during the war, realized that there was a great demand for more learning, particularly in cultural subjects. With this in view, he has now bought Stoke House in order to hold short courses in art, music, drama and handicrafts. An attempt will be made to provide an outlet for self-expression, so that when students leave they will either want to come back again or they will go home determined to benefit by their introduction to creative

Stoke House is opening on August 27th with a week's conference for teachers, and for others who are interested, on *Understanding the Adolescent*. Various subjects will be discussed and they will all have some bearing on this problematic aspect of education.

The speakers will be The Rt Hon H. Graham White on Human Relationships in Industry; H. A. T. Child on Vocational Guidance; Alec Clifton-Taylor on Good and Bad Taste; A. A. Dams on Poetry and Drama; Lionel Gamlin on How to be a Good-Humoured Teacher; C. Handley-Read on Self-expression through Painting; Dr E. Graham Howe on the Art of Healing; G. A. Lyward on the Religious Difficulties of the Adolescent; E. J. D. Radclyffe on the Moods of the Adolescent; John Wales on the Scope and Limits of Visual Education; Commander F. Whitehead on the Transition from School to Work.

On August 28th the Central Office of Information will show some educational films, including it is hoped, *Children of the City* (the film about juvenile delinquency in Scotland).

Particulars of this conference may be obtained from Mr C. S. D. Moore, the Director of Studies at Stoke House; his address is Dane Court School, Blandford, Dorset.

# FLIGHTS OF FANCY

By

### R. E. WHITEHALL

THE production of films is a remarkable business, Nothing can ever be taken for granted, as the many critics of the wartime developments in the French cinema are now discovering. The people who attacked the French excursion into an unreal world of witchcraft and magic as 'decadent' and 'unhealthy', are now discovering that one does not necessarily have to degenerate under foreign occupation in order to dally with dream desire within the confines of a rather frail edifice of celluloid.

The flight from reality is a too-frequent phenomenon in the post-war British cinema not to be disturbing. Disturbing in that the types of subjects now in the offing would not have looked out of place on the production schedules of the major British studios during the middle 'thirties. The same ponderous historical subjects (some of them merely revivals of ideas not put into production during that period due to financial difficulties) appear now with a greater gloss and sheen, but with a complete lack of the sound common sense characterizing the great British films between 1939 and the present day and-remembering the early Asquith films, the Hitchcock productions, The Edge of the World, Bank Holiday, The Citadel, and a few other isolated examplesthose of pre-war days also.

It is easier to get a balanced view of the airy flights of fancy on the part of our producers if one remembers the position in Italy, a country where there is far more reason for an escapist trend, and the fact that Italian film-makers are increasingly turning to the theory that the ultimate aim of the cinema should be to provide something more than entertainment. The whole of post-war life in that broken country has been explored, at first through the semi-documentary, and now in humanistic terms.

### Best Italian Film

Robert Rosselini, the finest exponent of ordinary emotions in a drab world since the Carné of *Quai des Brumes* and *Le Jour se Lève*, has followed *Rome Open City* and *Desiderio* with *Paisa*, a bi-lingual film with a mixed Italian-American cast, dealing with the psychological influence of the Allies on the Italian civilian. The film has been hailed as the best ever to come from Italy. Rosselini, who insists on supervising his own films from script to screen is now working with Max Colpet on a film treating the minority problem.

This director is not an isolated example of the Italian cinema's awareness of modern problems—there are many others—yet it is rather curious that the first Italian film to reach this country since 1939 is an operatic film which might well have been made in the pre-war years. There is no accountable reason why *The Barber of Seville* should be given preference over far worthier

films which have not, at the moment of writing, been acquired for exhibition in this country.

Even Hollywood, the butt of the universe, has produced, during a season almost as barren as the dust-deserts of Oklahoma, post-war themes of vital importance, maltreated in *Till the End of Time*, intelligently handled in *The Best Years of Our Lives*.

There is the stuff of drama in reconstruction. If anyone doubts that, let them see what Jill Craigie did with *The Way We Live*, laying the problem fairly and squarely in the laps of the audience, providing no loophole for evasive rationalization. Miss Craigie's documentary had more dramatic impact than a dozen inoffensive little thrillers or polite drawing room comedies, more genuine cinema than will be found between the covers of Miss du Maurier's latest best-seller, and distribution comparable to that of the newest Continental masterpiece.

There are a whole set of new problems—social, economic, cultural, even political (Hollywood is preparing a quartet of films, Crossfire, Gentleman's Agreement, Lights Out, and Earth and High Heaven, all attacking racial prejudice either against Negro or Jew). Ealing, the most socially conscious of British studios, have completed Frieda, dealing with the difficulties of personal Anglo-German relationships at the present time, and are filming A. J. La Bern's extraordinary story, compressed within 24 hours, of small-time crooks in the East End of London. The Boulting Brothers are following Thunder Rock and Fame is the Spur with Graham Greene's Brighton Rock. Gainsborough have Good Time Girl, dealing with delinquency, and Holiday Camp, an unknown quantity from one of the best of the younger documentary directors, Ken Annakin, but elsewhere current films are aimed further and further away from reality. To visit a British studio today is rather like taking a trip to Madame Tussauds, all the great figures of the past century, particularly murderers, are there.

### Now Blue Lagoon

The combination of Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat once made two outstanding documents of lower middle-class life, followed by a satire in the tradition of Hogarth and Rowlandson. Now they are intent on filming H. de Vere Stacpoole's *Blue Lagoon*, a saga wherein the beauteous Miss Jean Simmons and some unknown Hollywood lad are cast away on a desert island.

With all too disconcerting frequency this desert island complex seems to be cropping up, as unhealthy in its way as the deliberate distortion or suppression of fact in the new Russian films, such as The Vow. There is no room for thesis films in the Russian manner (as They Came to a City only too well proves), but The Best Years of Our Lives illustrates that present-day problems can be treated in such a way as to combine enthusiastic audience reaction with wider and deeper searching into the moral and spiritual values of the modern world. Any film industry which is to be a living force must mirror the world of which it is part, expressing with vigorous simplicity the heart and mind of the nation. The roots of a film industry should be deep in the national culture.

Liu Ling, one of the Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove, wrote, in the third century, ... the affairs of this world appear but as so much duckweed on a river', a sentiment apparently adopted as a motto by far too many film producers.

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# FILMS FOR THE ARMY:

# THE WORK OF AKC

The Army Kinema Corporation, a civilian organization, was set up last year to continue the work done during the war by the Directorate of Army Kinematography at the War Office by the Army Kinema Service in the field, and by ENSA on the entertainment film side.

### Supervision

The AKC is responsible for supervising the production, through civilian trade firms, of all training and instructional films for the army and for distributing and exhibiting the release prints when the films are finally approved. A typical release print order is for, say, 20 x 35 mm and 70 x 16 mm prints, though, of course, this varies with the type of film and the precise audience for whom it is intended. Prints are sent to AKC libraries (there are 13 in the UK and about 25 major libraries overseas, from Japan to West Africa and from Hamburg to East Africa) where they are held for issue on demand. A small number are earmarked for schools and training centres which have specialized film libraries of their own. Many army units have their own 16 mm. projector and films are issued to them by post or local delivery; in addition, all AKC district libraries have dual mobile 16 mm projection equipments which serve units which for one reason or another have no projector of their own. There are over 120 of these equipments in the United Kingdom and over 300 overseas or in troopships. All AKC libraries have their own technical and administrative staff, and film repair and maintenance workshops.

### Distribution

As well as handling training and instructional films for the army, the AKC rents, distributes and exhibits entertainment films. These are shown both in 35 mm (there are about 250 35 mm theatres operated by AKC all over the world) and in 16 mm. These entertainment films are obtained under the terms of the contractual agreements made by the AKC with the major British and American renters. The agreements guard civilian exhibitors' rights, and define what categories of soldiers' friends and relations may attend AKC shows. About 104 feature films are booked annually and are shown to army units large and small, wherever they may be. As the Treasury has now withdrawn the subsidy for entertainment for the Forces, the cost of providing these entertainment films has to be met from the box office receipts, which are fixed in agreement with War Office. The small and isolated units, whose need for entertainment is greatest, are catered for by an elaborate system of 16 mm mobile routings. AKC's aim is to give the soldier the best possible entertainment films at the cheapest prices whether he is in a big city in Germany or guarding a desert outpost.

#### General Interest

Many of the War Office Instructional films are of wide general interest; some have been reviewed from time to time in the DNL and in other Documentary trade journals. A number have been 'adopted' by the Central Film Library in the same way that the War Office has adopted films from COI and elsewhere, and these are available in the usual way from the CFL. To meet the many requests for copies of their films, the War Office have recently authorized the prints held in AKC libraries to be made available to approved civilian organizations at a hire charge of 5s. a reel a day (16 mm). Among these films are the ABCA Magazine series-10 minute films on current topics designed to serve as a basis for discussion—Coal, Education, Town and Country Planning, etc.; the Current Affairs Series including Read All About it, a three-reeler about the Press designed to show the difference between news and views, and to show how a newspaper works; Our Teeth, which shows in an amusing and non-technical way why it is a good idea to keep one's teeth clean; Best Feet Forward, made for the ATS on the care of the feet; Technique of Instruction in the Army, already widely known outside the army as an effective aid in instructing the instructors; the eleven films of the Map Reading Series which, although dealing primarily with the use of the map from a military point of view, show details, in actuality and diagram, of conventional signs, contours, direction finding and so on. There are also a number of technical films like those on Compression Ignition Engines and on Elementary Principles of MT Vehicles.

Full details of these films can be obtained from the AKC libraries at York, Hounslow, Edinburgh, Salisbury, Belfast and Chester, or from Curzon Street House, London, W1.

### NUCLEUS

Data and Seven-League Film Units have together founded an independent company to produce medical and biological films

The following examples of productions now in hand indicate the scope of this unit:—

Studies in Human Lactation for doctors and midwires

Lumbar Puncture in Infants for 5th year medical students

Diagnosis of Threadworm Infestation for doctors

Ocular Palsies for 2nd and 3rd year medical students

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Directors: Jack Chambers Hans M Nieter D Phil Brian Stanf rd MRGS DMR FRPS

Nucleus Film Unit Limited 26 D'Arblay Street London W1

Denis Segaller has just returned from USA he sends us this brief account of

# AMERICAN LOCATION

DNL has asked me to write down some of my impressions of America. What shall I write about? I have come back absolutely saturated with impressions—mostly good ones! This 11-week trip of mine (April, May, and half of June) has been wonderful—one of the greatest and most delightful experiences I have ever had. (Or maybe that much is obvious anyhow.)

RMS Queen Elizabeth is breathtaking . . . and can take your appetite away, too. For an exquisitely uncomfortable sensation I can recommend seeing a film—any film—on board ship in a rough sea, with the screen pitching gently to and fro. The Queen Elizabeth has two fully equipped cinemas, with a daily change of programme—single feature—films such as Johnnie O'Clock, Nicholas Nickleby, Margie (which I rather went for) plus the usual short. This Modern Age's Coal Crisis went down extremely well with a somewhat cosmopolitan audience.

The purpose of my trip was to shoot certain processes in oil refining for the instructional *Refinery Series* I am making at Shell. One of my two chief refinery locations was at Dominguez, some twenty miles from Hollywood. So after two days in New York off I went to the West Coast.

I enjoyed Hollywood a lot. One of the things I liked about it was the pleasant cool, white architecture—nary an ugly building in sight—

and an air of spaciousness. Hollywood isn't a very clearly-defined geographical unit, but just a 'district' in the enormous sprawling mass of Los Angeles, bounded on the West and South by other districts known vaguely as Beverley Hills (where Shirley Temple lives) and Wilshire (one 't' and no 't'), and on the North by the Santa Monica mountains, which are reminiscent of Italy and reputed to contain poisonous snakes.

'The Boulevard'—Hollywood Boulevard—is mainly shops—not as expensive as you'd think—and, of course, Sid Grauman's beautiful Chinese Theatre with hand- and footprints of many stars (including the Durrante schnozzle-print).

My shooting was all exterior work. Union minimum crew consisted of: cameraman (£23 a day), operator (about half that amount), assistant (can't remember his rate), and electrician (about £5 a day). These are full studio rates as there is no separate shorts agreement. The crew were grand to work with and turned in the best possible stuff.

We had our weather troubles, however. The Los Angeles district suffers from a fairly new climatic disease known locally as 'smog'. This is not unlike a London peasouper, only blue, not yellow; it is largely caused by the many new industrial plants which have sprung up in the area during the war years, plus, I suspect, some

sea mist blowing in from the Pacific. It tended to be very thick most mornings on location, and sometimes we had no sun until late afternoon. We also had considerable cloud and general overcast.

Shooting in and around oil refineries is an interesting but rather mucky business. Our feet sank in tar melted by the heat of the sun (when there was any sun), our hands and clothes got covered in oil and grease climbing up tanks and towers. I left my 'refinery suit' behind when the job was finished.

George Pal is at present making a series of Puppetoon Films in colour for Shell; I met him two or three times and was lucky enough to be shown round his studios. I was glad to learn something of his shooting methods and to examine his fascinating little puppets, which are models of craftsmanship. He uses a variety of animation techniques: changes of facial expression for example are produced by a series of heads, each with a peg registering into a hole in the neck.

I was also taken on to a couple of sets at Warners during rehearsals between takes. Much impressed by general air of efficiency and order yet at the same time a feeling of good humour.

Many units in Hollywood and elsewhere making documentary, instructional or 'commercial' films are operating entirely on 16 mm. Main reasons are: lower cost, and colour. Right now it is difficult or even impossible to obtain 35 mm. colour facilities for any non-theatrical productions, whereas on 16 mm. Kodachrome is readily available. 16 mm. shooting, editing, printing and optical facilities are much better organized on the whole than over here, and quality of show copies tends to be higher.

My other main location was at a refinery in Texas, near the Gulf Coast. Here by contrast we had a week of the most perfect shooting weather—sun (and was it hot?), brilliant blue sky and some wonderful cloud effects. I was told photographers come to the Gulf Coast from all over the USA to shoot clouds, and Hollywood even sends cameramen the 1,800 miles to get clouds for library material to be used for back-projection.

Everywhere I went folks were extremely hospitable and kind. I found Americans on the whole a friendly, informal and delightful people, and liked what I saw of the American way of life.

Everywhere, too, I found the greatest appreciation of British films. Not only are such British Shell films as Distillation, Transfer of Power, and Hydraulics acclaimed and widely used by the Shell organization in the USA, but these and other more recent British documentaries such as Children's Charter, Your Children's Eyes, etc. seem to be achieving great things in the schools and in other non-theatrical fields. (I would like to be able to say a lot more about this nontheatrical distribution set-up, but must plead limited knowledge. This I do know, that numerous small private firms seem to be hiring projectors and other visual aids apparatus to schools and youth clubs, and with these go a fair proportion of British documentaries. US educational bodies as a whole seem a whole lot more filmconscious than in this country.)

Nearly everyone I spoke to had seen and was enthusiastic about such films as *Brief Encounter*, *Henry V*, *Stairway to Heaven (A Matter of Life and Death)* and *This Happy Breed*. I saw *Great Expectations* playing to a full house of 6,500 in Radio City Music Hall in New York. It went down good and big: my two American friends declared it the best film they had ever seen.

# THE HORIZON FILM UNIT .

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(PRODUCER: MAX MUNDEN)

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### CORRESPONDENCE about

# FILMS ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### From a Local Government PRO

DEAR SIR,

I was more than glad to see that space had been given to the article by Alec Spoor in the last issue of the DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER, and I must strongly support all he has written on the idea of films to explain the workings of local government to the people.

As a practising Public Relations Officer, I feel that the cinema, in furthering the cause of citizenship, can do much to combat the appalling apathy of the average citizen regarding matters of local public interest, an apathy of which the cinema is often accused of being the first cause!

There is no doubt that much of the social disorder apparent today is due to the fact that the sense of civic pride and native consciousness has lost its rightful place in our lives. In the old days of local government from the parish pump there was a great deal of the personal and intimate element linked with the townspeople's deliberations. Every name was known, almost every face, and sometimes even their private ambitions were common knowledge. The absence of many of the modern social services, administered by the Town Hall, particularly the public health and hospital services, called forth a continued application of the principles of neighbourliness and friendly cooperation. Many of the opportunities for the expression of these principles are withdrawn from our modern social order and, in depending to a great extent on the uninterrupted continuance of the services organized from the Town Hall, we have lost a great deal of our sense of dependence on each other, as neighbours and members of a community.

Social surveys have revealed that the majority of people are bound to any sort of code of ethics only by cobweb chains, by an inherent sense of decency, rather than a defined attitude to life. They remain generally out of focus and bewildered, and it is this aimlessness which breeds apathy and, let us be honest, is a considerable factor in filling the cinemas. Of the multitude of regular cinema-goers, how many are 'choosey', and how many go out of sheer habit, principally because the cinema is one form of entertainment which requires little effort on their part, but may be relied upon to shut out drab reality for an evening.

Is the cinema content to be regarded as an opiate to an already bored population so long as box office receipts are satisfactory? Or does it feel that being, as it is widely acknowledged, a most pleasant form of diversion, it might use its undoubted attraction to broaden and enrich the outlook and the lives of its patrons? It has a golden opportunity for so doing. There is no reason why the education of the public should be confined to educating the children at their special matinees, nor is it necessary to revise the entire policy of the film industry which is, I take it, to give the public what it wants.

Only short documentary films are needed to remind John Citizen of the ever watchful care exercised by the local authority on his behalf.

Local government is a very interesting human story, beginning even before the birth of every new citizen, present when he first sees the light of day, and ready to put on his first nappie! It watches over his health in the first anxious weeks and then, reassured, follows him to the day nursery, sits with him in the park, provides him with babyhood amusements, and receives him with due pride into school. Local government shares with the parents the duty of instilling into the future citizen the virtues of decency and uprightness, teaches him his limitations as well as his rights, and having fitted him for life, helps him to decide on his future career. The libraries are available for his use for pleasure and instruction. The parks and swimming baths and sports facilities are always there for his recreation, and when boy meets girl, there's a friendly tree upon which to carve two hearts and an arrow.

For the responsibilities of manhood and housewifery, the background services are always at work. The services providing for the general safety and health of the people, clean food, fair measure and good weight, are ensured. The streets are kept clean and dry, refuse is taken away. Sanitary inspectors are always on call. Perhaps John Citizen takes an allotment. In case

of accidents, there is an ambulance service. In any distress, physical, mental or financial, local government is there offering the helping hand, the hand of the community, held out to any of its members.

It is surely a worthy motive; this renaissance of the sense of citizenship, which can only be brought about by showing the work of the Town Hall in a human and interesting way. Most people are concerned only with matters which affect their own lives. Local government embraces all, and its impact is everywhere apparent—so very apparent that it remains unheeded. The streets we walk on, the schools our children attend, sometimes the house we live in (or would like to live in), the open spaces we frequent at times; all are provided by the local authority.

The cinema should do all it can to press this fact home to the mass of uninterested citizens, for until the general public take more interest in local affairs, we shall continue to fall short of full democratic representation.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN C. SUTCLIFFE
Public Relations Officer

Town Clerk's Department, Town Hall, Ealing, W5.

# INFORMATIONAL FILM YEAR BOOK

An essential handbook for everyone interested in the non-theatrical film. Contributors include: John Grierson, Paul Rotha, Basil Wright, Andrew Buchanan, Oliver Bell, J. B. Frizell, Forsyth Hardy, Norman Wilson, etc. There is a Buyer's Guide to Apparatus and full lists of makers, producers, libraries, organizations, etc., with full details of the year's documentary films. *Illustrated*, 10s. 6d. net. By post 11s.

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# NEW BOOKS ON FILM

Penguin Film Review No. 2. Penguin Books. 1s. The second edition of the Penguin Film Review amply fulfils the promise of the first. Without being esoteric, it manages to deal in a serious style with many important aspects of the cinema both in this country and abroad, and it is gratifying to anyone interested in the progress of the film that there seems to be a wide public for intelligent criticism and analysis of the kind found in its pages. Those who are primarily concerned with the documentary aspect of the cinema will find much food for thought in the article by Basil Wright on 'Documentary Today'. 'Confusion of public thought', says Mr Wright, 'as to what a documentary film is doesn't matter much'. He goes on, 'if it is agreed that a definition of the documentary film is no longer really necessary, it becomes quite plain that documentary is not this or that type of film, but simply a method of approach to public information'. (His italies.) It includes 'all known media of information, particularly films, film-strips, slides, radio, television, stills and illustrations of all sorts, the Press (daily, weekly and periodical in general), diagrams, wall-newspapers, pamphlets, books, lectures and exhibitions'. Other articles include a fascinating account by Thorold Dickinson of the painstaking search which he undertook to ensure authenticity in the African music for his film Men of Two Worlds, an informative description of the Moscow Script Studio screenwriting by Catherine de la Roche, the first part of a survey by Ragna Jackson, of the Scandinavian film, and a number of interesting statistics collected by H. H. Wollenberg.

Informational Film Year Book, 1947. The Albyn Press, Edinburgh, 2. 10s. 6d.

If you want to know anything about anything in the documentary film world, how do you find out? You ask your friends, you write letters, you read magazines and you still can't find out what you want to know—up to now that has been the position. At last the Albyn Press has come to the rescue with their Informational Film Year Book—the first of an annual series. Let all those in or around the documentary film world stand up, take off their hats and pass a vote of thanks.

Here is a well-laid out objective source of information. Admittedly, it may not be completely comprehensive but it takes many, many steps in the right direction. The first half contains articles by such documentary figures as Grierson, Rotha, Wright and Forsyth Hardy and also chapters on the film in Scotland and Ireland. It is worth reading and most interesting to amateur and professional.

The second half has a Buyers' Guide and lists of Organizations, Film Societies, Production Units Studios, Libraries, Publications, etc. There is a list of the documentaries made in the past year and some stills from these films.

Buy this book and keep it carefully hidden—otherwise it will vanish.

The World is My Cinema. E. W. and M. M. Robson. (Sidnevan Society.) 12s, 6d.

In 205 foam-flecked pages the authors put forward an almost unimaginably preposterous analysis of the cinema today. Their argument, as far as it is possible to disentangle it from the shock-headed language and spaghetti-snarled thought in which it is presented, seems to go something like this—if you can believe it. British films are no good; worse, they are a sinister, malign menace to our national purity, foully intended by their makers, who have 'a Sadist-Fascist mental complex', to lure us all to Nazism and war. There is only one way out. We must insist that they shall be made according to the Christian ethic as set out in the Hays Code, which the authors compare with the Sermon on the Mount. It is because most American pictures have in the past conformed to this high moral standard that they have been so successful at the democratic polling-booth of the box-office, American pictures do not, we are given to understand, treat low, disgusting, unpleasant subjects with the bad taste shown in Champagne Charlie which is all about drink; are not obscene like Uncensored which contains two references to 'behinds'; do not lower the sanctity of marriage and the home as Anthony Asquith did in Fanny by Gaslight; are not disrespectful to the flag like The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp; do not hold religion up to ridicule as was so shamefully done in Henry V. The 'Sadists and Schizophenics, pathological murderers and other subconscious disease mindedness' which besmirch the British screen find devilish advocacy in the writings of critics like Lejeune and Powell, with their liking for the depraved Continental cinema, and originate partly in the gospel of sexual promiscuity preached by Engels in The Origin of the Family, and partly in the deprayed philosophy of 'the aesthetes, the hedonists, the cynics and the vocal sadists deriving from the French and German schools' who apparently include Shaw, Wilde, Swinburne, James Joyce and O'Shaugh-

Well, that's the gist of it. It will cost you twelve-and-sixpence if you want it. Or you can go to Hyde Park and hear the same sort of thing free, and get some fresh air at the same time.

British Film Music: John Huntley. (Skelton Robinson.) 17s. 6d.

Mr Huntley's survey of the music of the British cinema might be readily sub-divided into three sections. We have articles on most aspects of the field by Huntley himself—surely Muir Mathieson's most faithful and devoted satellite; we have some contributions by men prominent in the art of film music; and we have a biographical and index section of great value. Mr Huntley describes his work as not a discussion of theory but a statement of the facts. Perhaps it is a pity that a little more care was not taken in his collection of these facts. It might be said that in a book containing such a wealth of

information some errors were bound to creep in. Still, in a volume in which the greatest value lies in the references as to who did what and when. such mistakes are small but important. For instance, the GPO Film Unit did not become the Crown Film Unit in 1939; Stricken Peninsula could scarcely be described as a production of the Army Film Unit, and Kenneth Pakeman did not compose the music for October Man. This last is rather a bloomer coming as it does from one who attended a lot of the recording of Alwyn's music. Somehow one gets the impression that the book would have been much better-and certainly much more accurate—had more time been devoted to proof correction. There is something of the atmosphere of a work rushed into press that is unfortunate in a reference work on so important a subject. If it comes to that Mr Huntley's description of the process of recording sound on film has a colourful naiveté which would look better if technicalities had not been cast entirely away. Nevertheless, the book contains a vast amount of valuable information. The research involved must have been prodigious. It is fair and anything but patronizing to the documentary movement—and who are we not to be grateful for small mercies? If 17s. 6d. is a lot of money for a slim volume, well, we have some very chaste illustrations and a description of a music session by one of the orchestra which is pure joy.

### WORLD UNION OF DOCUMENTARY

on June 8th and 9th, 1947, a meeting of individual members of the documentary film movement took place in Brussels.

Australia, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, Holland, Jugoslavia, Poland, United Kingdom, USA and S. Africa were represented.

After an exchange of views and information it was agreed to form a World Union of Documentary.

A resolution, addressed to all workers, stressed the indispensable role which documentary has to play in the post-war world. The preamble said that documentary had not only to state all the problems but also to guide the peoples towards the solution of these problems. Work must be done which would secure the full expression of social, economic and cultural life through the medium of film. The resolution ended:

'The principal tasks confronting documentary workers are as follows:

The fight against the enemies of peace and democracy; national, racial and economic oppression and religious intolerance; poverty and disease, illiteracy, ignorance and other social evils.

And the fight for peace and reconstruction; independence of subject peoples; free intellectual and cultural expression; dissemination of knowledge, not at present available to all.

Documentary film workers will collaborate with all international organizations working for the principles enumerated above.'

# SIGHT and SOUND

A cultural Quarterly

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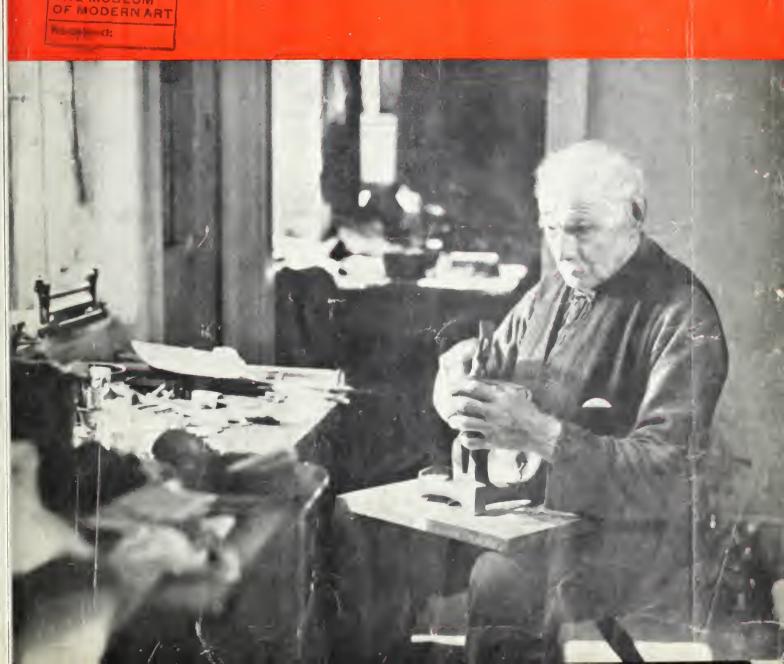
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# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

Editorial Board: Stephen Ackroyd, Donald Alexander, Max Anderson, Edgar Anstey, Geoffrey Bell, Ken Cameron, Paul Fletcher, Sinclair Road, Grahame Tharp, Basil Wright

OCTOBER 1947

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# THE IMPORT TAX

(THE COVER STILL ON THIS ISSUE COMES FROM THE DANISH FILM THE SEVENTH AGE)

The complete failure of certain sections of the Industry, and of the Trade Press in particular, to take even a moderately sober view of the 75 per cent tax on foreign films, has only been partially offset by the statesmanlike attitude of the BFPA. Otherwise the Trade seems to have been bent on confirming the accusations of its most violent critics that it is largely a tool of American finance anyway.

The plain fact is that hysterical screams about the disaster which is about to overtake the British public in the form of closed moviehouses are both stupid and pointless. It is probably not true to say that people won't go to revivals of films; on the contrary, a large number have been revived, and successfully, during the past years. A little ingenuity and showmanship could work wonders—for instance, a Hitchcock repertory season. Meantime one notes that Britain's largest cinema has just had a week of live ballet, and been packed out. Dare one wonder whether the public would mind all that much if there weren't any films after all? The cinema is quite a mild drug, and enforced abstention from it is not likely to be even as irritating as abstention from smoking. At present, in any case. general opinion seems to be that the Americans will not cease to send films here, if only for the reason that in a market which has always shown a clear profit (to the extent of determining financial policy as regards production costs) they will, in the end, take 25 per cent if they can't get 100 per cent; in other words, £4,000,000 a year is better than nothing. While British production cannot at this stage expect to be able to fill what in any case will be a biggish gap, there is no doubt that annual output can go up pretty considerably if inflated budget pictures are abandoned, if the working tempo of British film production is stepped-up (a psychological as well as a technical matter), and if something is done to encourage the documentary and short-film people by providing some expectation of a reasonable financial return on production. A single feature programme will, of course, be necessary; and although the

Bernstein questionnaire showed a large majority in favour of the double feature, there is no reason to suppose that people will not quickly get used to the other, always providing that the supporting programme consists (as it certainly does not today) of good quality stuff. All these factors mean that the imminent issue of the Government White Paper on the new Cinematograph Films Bill is of the greatest importance, even if the idea of Quota sounds, under immediate circumstances, a little incongruous. Financially and economically, there is every justification for the Import Tax, and the average citizen will in the end prefer to find Spam in the tin rather than Carmen Miranda. But this justification should not blind us to the real disadvantages of the tax. Films carry ideas, and a tax on foreign films is a tax on the interchange of ideas. The tax is aimed at America only; but it hits equally hard the import of films from other countries. It may be said that films from I rance, Sweden, Denmark or ftaly impinge little enough on the general film-going public, and that their total cessation would not matter. The reply to this is that the best of the European films have an influence on public taste out of all proportion to their audiences. not least do they influence the technicians who make British films. Also it must be remembered that one of the main reasons why European films are not more widely shown here is the determination of the US-influenced section of the Trade that they shall not be shown. Had it been possible to encourage the entry of European films while taxing the entry of US films, the general audiences in this country -after a period of resistance no doubt -would have benefited a great deal. But it must not be forgotten that the tax on ideas applies with equal force to the best of Hollywood production too. Deprived of this best, we should miss something really valuable, and not least the link of ordinary understanding between peoples which the film, and the US film especially, can, at its finest. so vividly and cogently supply

# UNESCO REPORTS

# By SINCLAIR ROAD

'UNESCO should as a first and pressing measure appoint three Commissions on Immediate Technical Needs, to examine the requirements of those countries, particularly in Europe and the Far East, where the war has caused serious loss of equipment and personnel, or where rehabilitation and reconstruction are affected by inadequate technical knowledge and facilities.'

The first step in constructing the defences of peace was to put the instruments of education back into the hands of the people of Europe and the Far East. Accordingly the first General Conference in Paris instructed UNESCO to survey the main requirements. Executive Committees went to work, commissions were appointed, and teams of research workers sent out in the early part of this year to the twelve countries selected for immediate investigation. By the end of August, reports were ready, summarizing the technical Press, radio and film needs of France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland, Norway, Denmark, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Greece, China and the Philippines. Conferences have since been held to consider the findings and to make detailed practical recommendations. One of UNESCO's projects for 1947 has been completed. The report on film needs is concise, factual and unique. Apart from meeting the immediate aim of assessing the technical deficiencies of a number of countries, the report does several other jobs. It was also designed to serve another part of the Mass Communication programme which is concerned with removing obstacles to the free flow of information, such as quotas, tariffs and censorship regulations. The material finally collected gives, therefore, the first accurate picture of the rise and development of the film medium in the countries surveyed. Up to now the main source of information about world film activities has been the Motion Picture Section of the US Department of Commerce, which has in turn depended for its intelligence on Hollywood. Its publications are useful though, in reality, they are little more than rough and ready assessments of the marketing prospects for American films. The UNESCO report is of quite a different calibre and with it UNESCO's film department has at least established itself as a world centre for film information.

The key to the whole inquiry is a questionnaire of staggering proportions. Nearly 500 questions were prepared on films alone. This was the basis on which the research teams collected their information. The final result is a testimony of thorough and willing co-operation between those who asked and those who answered.

It is impossible to do the film report justice in so short a space. Very briefly the kind of information obtained is as follows. Full particulars are given of all known projection facilities, 35 mm and 16 mm, sound and silent, mobile and static, commercially operated, installed in schools or used in other ways. Approximate attendance figures at the cinemas are also included. Com-

mercial distribution machinery is described and the percentages of foreign film imports given. It is, therefore, possible to see, for example, the extent to which American domination of the world screens has declined since 1939 and the distribution of British films increased. Production resources are covered in some detailstudios, personnel, finance, technical development, output. Manufacture of raw materials and equipment and facilities for professional training are dealt with under separate headings. Educational films are also considered apart, and it is interesting to note the relatively large place they occupy. A brief sketch is given of the conditions under which the film industry operates in each country, the legislation which has been introduced and in general the importance which is attached to the film medium.

The general impression is of greatly expanded interest in all uses of the film, as revealed by increased cinema attendance and growing official support. We have had first-hand evidence of the zeal of the Czechs, but the report shows just as much urgent attention being given to making and using films in Poland, Norway, Denmark, Yugoslavia and even Luxembourg. Where no contribution can be made in terms of studio-made feature films, because markets or the particular language group are small, there is growing documentary and educational film activity. In the long run the contribution which each country can make to the overall purposes of world education may as a result be even greater, provided there is the willingness and machinery to exchange the films once they are made.

### Currency difficulties

The conclusions which the report comes to summarize the main technical needs. Raw materials-film stock and chemical products -do not present a major problem. Equipment for production and laboratories and for exhibition constitute the principal deficiency. Equipment for exhibition is by far the greater item of expense, and the need is chiefly for 16 mm and film strip projectors which again emphasizes the growing rise of films in education. Nearly all countries have further expressed their need for first-rate educational films from abroad. They want to receive catalogues, but more particularly they are anxious to establish some kind of exchange system to overcome currency difficulties. This is a question which requires some immediate solution if the regular interchange of documentary and educational films is to be effective.

The total needs have been assessed in the report at roughly £5-6 million, of which 10 per cent represents needs for the development of educational film production and for exhibition equipment of all types. Expressed in terms of countries China accounts for more than half the needs,

and China, Greece and Poland together for 90 per cent.

### Equipment and Personnel

The report and its findings have in turn been vetted by a further Sub-Commission which has added its own recommendations. The Sub-Commission is of the opinion that world production capacity for black-and-white film stock, for chemicals and for equipment is sufficient to meet all needs, although it foresees continuing delays in the delivery of certain types of equipment. The problem of how countries are to obtain foreign exchange for their purchases is the subject of a further section in the Sub-Commission's recommendations. The creation of a special UNESCO fund is proposed to assist in re-equipping the Press, radio and film industries in war-devastated countries, and also the flotation of loans. Both proposals will be put before the next General Conference of UNESCO.

The Sub-Commission stresses the greatly extended use of 16 mm sound projectors for public film shows and the advantages, not the least being the smaller costs as compared with the use of 35 mm projectors. In passing it also notes a feeling in some countries that there will be strong technical reasons for the adoption of 17.5 mm instead of 16 mm for sub-standard equipment. It recommends UNESCO to in-

vestigate.

All countries need trained personnel; both more people and people with higher qualifications and wider experience. This is rightly put as a priority requirement. Interchange of personnel and of whole units and scholarships by the more fortunate countries—a scheme which UNESCO has already pioneered—can provide some of the answers. But let *us* not be too smug about this. At least two of the countries surveyed already operate proper training schemes of their own. It is time we hurried on with training plans for our own industry in Britain.

The Sub-Commission recommends that UNESCO should act as an International Clearing House of Information on films, a recommendation which is anticipated by the very fact and

excellence of the report itself.

There is a further proposal that UNESCO should maintain a Reference Film Library of selected films as a kind of shop window to simplify the job of choosing and viewing films. Action by UNESCO is also proposed to develop the exchange of educational films between countries without currency passing between them, and exemption of educational films and equipment from import-tax.

### Decision next month

In November the second General Conference of UNESCO takes place in Mexico City. The recommendations made by the Commission on

# FIRST INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF DOCUMENTARY FILMS

'Plato said it was in harmony—in the learning of harmony, in the pursuit of harmony that one could find the basis of justice and the basis of the good life. All art is a state of harmony and its form is the achievement of harmony. Its substance is concerned with all that breaks up harmony.

In that respect the arts have much of great practicality to give today. It is in the sight of man's achievements as literature presents them that we fire our will. It is in man's mind-at work, in difficulty and suffering, but still maintaining his great progress—that we find our inspiration for the future.

Documentary has a very specific part to play in this inspiration and in this work. It is an art, it is a public service, and it is an educational instrument. It is one of the few arts that has these three elements. It is a mirror held up to nature, but also it is a hammer shaping the future.'

(Excerpt from John Grierson's speech at the opening performance of the Festival)

The Edinburgh Festival demands much more than a casual notice. Our press date made it impossible to do justice to Scotland's initiative in this issue. Early in November we hope to bring out a special issue.

### TILL THEN WE SAY

# THANK YOU, SCOTLAND

### (Continued from page 134)

Technical Needs will come up for approval by the member nations present. They must decide whether the lines of action proposed for reequipping the film industries of Europe and the Far East are to be implemented. The value of the further surveys to which UNESCO is already committed will depend on the degree of willing co-operation shown at Mexico City. To prepare a plan of action, however excellent the plan, is pointless unless action can be taken. The recent FAO Conference in Geneva is a depressing example of the way in which self-interest and stupidity are impeding world reconstruction.

The fate of world plans does not, however,

depend only on the decisions of official con- the first time a representative collection of world ferences. UNESCO's report is not the responsibility of the delegates at Mexico City alone, It is a document which demands attention in every country and in all quarters where there is genuine interest in developing the use of the film. It is our responsibility in Britain to consider what can be done to bring foreign technicians to this country to study, to send film units abroad to work with local groups, to develop the two-way exchange with other countries of films of all types and relevant information.

A start has been made on all these fronts. The Ldinburgh Film Lestival brought together for

documentaries. In Brussels last July the basis of an organization of documentary film workers was laid in the World Union of Document rry. In Paris in October the Scientific Film Association as participating in a congress to establish an international scientific film body. At the recent International Conference of Film Trade Unions in Czechoslovakia similar problems were discussed. There is, both nationally and internationally, the machinery to support every one of the recommendations in the UNESCO report It is for us to take the lead which has been so ably given.

# SURVEY OF FILM IN FRANCE, BELGIUM AND LUXEMBOURG

'UNESCO Reports' gives a general picture of the scope and principal recommendations of the Commission of Technical Needs. In the first year the Commission has surveyed film developments in France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland, Norway, Denmark, Poland, Yugoslavia, Greece, China, and the Philippines. The information collected is unique and should be widely available. DNL is proposing to summarize the main findings in a series of articles. A beginning is made in this issue with France, Belgium and Luxembourg

### FRANCE

Since the liberation the French Government has adopted a constructive policy towards the film. In October, 1946, a National Cinematographic Centre (Centre National de Cinématographie) was set up under the control of the Ministry of Youth, Arts and Letters. The Director-General of the Centre is assisted by an Advisory Council representing both sides of the industry, and by an Administrative Committee representing eight Ministries. The Centre derives its funds from State subsidies and contributions from professional organizations.

The functions of the Centre as are follows:

- (a) to examine draft laws, and decrees;
- (b) to co-ordinate all branches of the industry, to arrange modernization and development, to collect statistics, to arbitrate in disputes;
- (c) to supervise financial arrangements and the proceeds of films;
- (d) to grant loans or subsidies to producers;
- (e) to distribute documentary films and develop the non-commercial side of the industry, to organize national and international exhibitions;
- (f) to arrange professional training;
- (g) to co-ordinate social work in the industry.

Although the French Government has stopped well short of nationalization, the Centre nevertheless occupies in principle a controlling position in the industry.

### Exhibition

Despite the fact that several hundred cinemas were damaged or destroyed during the war, cinema facilities are greater than in 1939. The number of cinemas operating on March 1st, 1947, was as follows:

Commercial exhibition	35mm	16mm
Cinemas	4,913	1,171
Travelling cincmas	149	4,164
Film Guilds		
Cinemas	442	
Travelling cinemas	-	1,891

The main increase has therefore been in the 16mm field. Cinemas attendances show a corresponding increase. The weekly attendance figure in 1946 was just over 9 million, one million of these being at 16mm shows. Although this figure is still well below the 25-30 million recorded in Britain, it is three million above the pre-war figure for France. Actual receipts, however, continue to be small. It has been estimated elsewhere that the present gross box-office takings are only 6,000 million francs a year (i.e. about £12 million), which is one of the factors contributing

to the present financial crisis besetting the French film industry.

Two other points are worth noting about the exhibiting side of the business. The circuit system is very little developed in France. The biggest of the three main circuits operates a total of 37 cinemas only, a great difference from the mammoth British combines. Moreover, all cinema programmes must, by a law of October, 1940, include only one long film of more than 1,200 metres, in other words the single feature programme is the order of the day.

#### Distribution

There are a large number of distributing companies, 90 operating in Paris. All the big American companies have their agencies and also the British Eagle-Lion. The entry of foreign films is controlled by legislation. All cinema programmes must show French films at least four weeks out of every twelve. This is one of the conditions laid down by the Franco-American agreement of May, 1946, by which the French film industry was 'blum-byrned' and brought to its present catastrophic state.

The films shown in French cinemas are increasingly of American origin. Of films released in Paris in 1946 the following were the countries of origin:

			per cent
America		 	46
France		 	41
England		 	8
USSR		 	2.5
Other cou	ntries	 	2.5

American films are also obtaining an increasing percentage of box-office receipts. Today the figure is 50-55 per cent of the total as compared with 35-40 per cent pre-war. The number of British films shown has also risen, but still does not constitute an important factor. France remains tied to Hollywood.

### Production

France emerged from the war with most of its film production resources intact. Today it has 15 studios with 44 stages in use, and there are a large number of production companies of all types. In 1946, 94 long feature films were produced and about 150 to 200 documentaries, shorts and cartoons. This year, however, the conditions of the Franco-American agreement are beginning to take their toll. Estimated feature production is down to 45. Government finance is available to producers in the form of loans or subsidy, but this alone is of no avail. A draft resolution has recently been submitted to the

Second Assembly calling upon the Government to take drastic action to save the industry in its present plight. Already in 1946 French producers made a loss of 1,000 million francs, while production costs are up ten times on the 1939 figures. Since then the situation has become worse and the industry is threatened with complete collapse and the unemploymen: of its skilled technicians. The resolution put up to the Government proposes cuts in the taxes levied on the industry, more loans to the best French producers, increased exports of French films and above all a revision of the disastrous agreement which Blum negotiated with America. The film industry has been incorporated in the Monnet plan for the reconstruction of French economy and it is to be hoped that some positive action can and will be taken.

### Films and Education

The UNESCO Report also gives details of the equipment situation in France and also of training facilities, but the other main section deals with the educational film position.

Since 1914 the French Government has taken an active interest in the use of films in education. A central library of films has been in existence at the Musée Pédagogique since 1920. Today it contains some 400 films, three-quarters of which are silent. In French schools there are about 5,000 35mm silent projectors and between 600 and 800 16mm sound and silent machines.

In 1944 a committee on educational cinema was set up to study and promote this use of the film. It is hoped ultimately to expand the library to include some 2,000 films and to install 100,000 projectors, preferably 16mm sound. This development is envisaged as part of the Monnet Plan and is estimated to cost 11,000 million francs. spread over ten years. The committee is to be responsible for vetting subjects for educational films, relying on the Centre National to arrange production, under teacher supervision and in cooperation with private companies. In principle the machinery set up has much in common with what has been planned in Britain. The use of foreign films is also envisaged, if they can be obtained on some kind of exchange basis. This is a point which our own Ministry of Education should go into as soon as possible.

Tribute is also paid in the UNESCO Report to the pioneering work of Jean Painlevé at the 'Institut de cinématographique scientifique' in the field of scientific film, and to the 'Cinémathèque Française' for its work in collecting films and documents dealing with the art of the film. The expansion of film societies is also an important factor in French film life. The 'Fédéra-

tion Française des Ciné-Clubs' now has about 120,000 members. A committee on films for children has also been formed recently to study the production and distribution of such films and to pull together the various efforts being made in that direction.

#### BELGIUM

The film position in Belgium is different in several important respects. Cinema attendance is quite high in proportion to population (the weekly figure is around three million), and there are 1,200 35mm cinemas and about 350 equipped for 16mm shows. On the other hand Belgium produces hardly any feature films of its own; the figure for 1945 was five only and for 1946 even less. The Belgian cinemas therefore depend almost exclusively on foreign products. The percentages of all films shown in 1946, according to country of origin, is roughly as follows:

US, 67%; France, 25%; England, 6%; Others, 2°

Like most of the countries in Western Europe Belgium continues to depend to a very large extent on America. There appear to be no restrictions operated by the Belgian Government against the importation of foreign films. In fact, Government action is limited to censorship and t) the development of educational film activity. No information is available about documentary film production. This is an unfortunate gap, since this is the field in which many of the smaller countries are finding that they can make an important contribution. The absence of Government initiative may be one explanation.

### Educational Films

The Belgian Ministry of Education has a Cinema Section formed in 1946 and responsible for developing the use of films and film strips. Unfortunately its library of films and all its files were destroyed by fire this year. The service had therefore to begin from scratch. Its functions cover the whole range from purchase of equipment, production and distribution of educational films to the supply of information. No exact information is available as to the number of projectors in schools, but they are said to be adequate for present needs. A non-profit-making company, Institut National de Cinématographie Scientifique', has also been formed to produce films for universities.

### LUXEMBOURG

UNESCO has not forgotten Luxembourg. Tiny, with no production studios and only 29 cinemas, the Grand Duchy nevertheless has an Educational Film Office and is seriously concerned with the problem of using films in schools. Only 45 silent projectors were left in use after the war, but there are plans to increase the number. The Office operates a library which contains 370 subjects and is already producing educational films of its own. Once again the position of Luxembourg

underlines the need for an international exchange system for educational films. Other countries should take note.

### Calling Film Societies

According to a Report in the Daily Herald (of September 23rd) the Kinematograph Renters' Society has decided that I alm Societies are becoming 'a threat to exhibitor interests'

We would like to draw the attention of Film Society members to this rather astonishing announcement and we invite them to let us know what they think

Do they feel that they are a threat? Or could it be that the boot is on the other foot?

Opinions, please!

### THE MILLER'S AIM

We feel that our readers may be interested in if you did happen to find an independent suburthe following extract from an article in Vorwarts -a paper published in the Russian Sector of Berlin.

We print it as it stands, with the original title and point out that it is written by a German for German consumption.

As usual, we remind readers that the views expressed in any article or extract do not necessarily coincide with the opinions of the Editorial

IN ENGLAND there is a special type of Miller. We mean a mill-owner and not a man called Mr Miller. The name of this mill-owner is J. Arthur RANK. He is of a special type because in the first place he is the owner of very many, very big mills—so to say-a 'monopolist-miller'.

The second reason for being outstanding is that Mr Rank developed an early liking for the cinema. Being a man of means, he at first afforded himself the luxury of a few cinemas and later of

In the course of time film studios, film distribution agencies and other branches of the film industry were added. Today things have reached the state that you can hardly enter a cinema in London which is not Mr Rank's property. It is just the same in the English provinces. However, ban cinema somewhere, you may rest assured that the film you would see had been made in Mr Rank's studios.

Of course, all this is fright-fully democratic. You may be certain that Mr Rank has a completely open mind and that his pictures faithfully reproduce his political convictions.

### Negotiations

We would never have started to talk about Mr Rank had it not been for the fact that this flour producer first of all interested himself in the German filmgoer.

According to the English Sunday Chronicle, he has for some considerable number of months kept a team of research men in Germany to study current conditions.

Now the agents of Mr Rank have proposed a plan to the British Control Commission for the taking over of UFA, in which the exploitation of Rank's lilms in Germany would promote the birth of a new democracy in Germany.

Should we Germans be asked for our unbiased opinion, then we could only answer that we did not envisage the new democracy meaning that Hugenberg's monopoly could be replaced by TRANK Rank's monopoly.

### CROOKS

THE STRICT laws of libel in this country are not infrequently a matter of editorial regret, and never more so than in dealing with the socalled 'producers' of the quickie shorts and featurettes which are currently tending to bring the name of documentary into disrepute amongst the cinema-going public. Originally these quickies, however much one may have objected to them, were not necessarily matters of dishonesty. The provisions of the Films Act, and the impossibility of getting adequate receipts from theatrical distribution, made the production of these films, costing as little as from £150 to £600, almost inevitable. Recently however this shoddy field of film-making has taken on a more sinister aspect. Quickie producers have noted that documentaries are usually sponsored films. Taking a leaf out of the documentary book, they have begun to turn more than a few dishonest pennies by sponsor-swindling on quite a big scale. This is how they do it. They approach an industrial or commercial firm and spin a long story about the enormous public which can be reached through the public cinemas, at a cost to the sponsor no greater than a few big adverts in the national dailies, and with an audience far greater than the readership of the newspapers. They add, though not of course in writing, that they can get good theatrical distribution. It

is extraordinary by the way how otherwise hard-headed businessmen fall for this sort of guff. The producer then quotes a production cost of £1,500 or more. When he gets the contract he makes the film for as little as £600. The film having been linished, the sponsor naturally starts to agitate about distribution; but he has nothing in writing. The producer spills all the old tricks of the trade—altered market conditions and whatnot and eventually offers to make a special effort to get the film into the cinemas. He then takes it personally to a renter who offers say, £350 for all distribution rights. This the producer pockets. His clear profit on the deal is in the neighbourhood of £1,200. The basic result is that the public is tormented yet again by a crapulous film of no merit whatever, the sponsor vows never to engage in films again, and, because the word documentary is as often as not impertinently attached to these productions, a totally false and deleterious impression about the factual film starts to get around. The only things which are satisfied in the whole episode are the producer, who can live in luxury at an expensive West End hotel as long as there are still suckers (and you know how often they are born); and, of course, the exhibitor's quota, which is why something drastic must be done about the whole situation in framing the new Films Bill.

### This article was written as an Introduction to a Catalogue of Danish Films

# DENMARK AND FILM

# By ARTHUR ELTON

DENMARK has made a contribution to the art of the film out of all proportion to the four million people who live within her borders. She was one of the earliest European countries to take up film production, and to this day on the Nordisk lot at Valby, near Copenhagen, stands a glass walled and roofed studio built in 1906 when interior scenes had to be illuminated by sunlight.

By the 'twenties, Denmark had become a major European producing centre of silent films. Asta Nielsen and Psilander were making hearts throb faster and breasts heave from Moscow to Madrid. All Europe laughed at Fyrtaarnet and Bivognen (Lighthouse and Tram-trailer), the famous pair of comedians, better known as Pat and Patachon, or Long and Short. It was at this time too, that a young journalist, Carl Theodor Dreyer, was gaining his first experience in films.

When the sound film spread round the world, Denmark was at a disadvantage. Not only was she a small country, but she belonged to one of the smaller language groups. Nevertheless, by rigid economies, she managed to keep her film industry alive and to make about ten feature films each year till the outbreak of World War II.

When I came to Denmark a little time after the liberation, almost the first film I saw was Carl Dreyer's masterly study of witchcraft, Day of Wrath (Vredens Dag), with its splendid acting and photographic quality and its moving formal stylized dialogue. I thought at the time, and I think still, that this is one of the world's most important contributions to the art of the cinema, to be ranged alongside such films as Potempkin, The Grapes of Wrath, The General, Drifters, The Covered Wagon, Song of Ceylon, and the Gold Rush. Alas, when the film was shown for the first time in Copenhagen, it was almost unanimously condemned by the film critics, and no producing company had wit enough to give Dreyer another film. It was not even sent to the Cannes Festival in 1946, where it would certainly have created a sensation.

### Fine Quality

Only the Danish Government had the wisdom to get Dreyer to work with documentary. It is England's good luck but Denmark's misfortune that Dreyer could only find support for a new feature in London, for a country can ill afford to lose her artists and creators.

Lest it be thought that Dreyer's masterpiece is the result of an individual genius, working outside a tradition and in isolation, at least two other feature films of fine quality have appeared in Denmark in the last eighteen months—The Red Meadows (De Rode Enger) and Ditte, Child of the People (Ditte Memeskebarn). The former, directed by Bodi Ipsen and Lau Lauritzen, is a taut workmanlike story of the Danish underground movement. The latter is the first full length feature film to be made by Bjarne Henning-

Jensen, who has trained both as an actor and as a documentary director. Several of his documentary films are listed in this catalogue. *Ditte* is a sensitive and finely observed study of the life of an illegitimate girl on Jutland. It has something of the quality of a novel by Thomas Hardy. Henning-Jensen's documentary sense, combined with his sense of character and situation, has enabled him to make a film both dramatic and full of the sights and sounds of country life. As one watches it, one can almost sniff the wind as it blows in from the North Sea across the Jutland dunes.

Such is the tradition and such are the achievements against which the present collection of one hundred documentary films must be judged.

### Before and during the war

Danish documentary had its beginnings just before the war. Paul Henningsen's long and beautifully photographed *The Film of Denmark*, produced in 1935 was an isolated experiment. By the time of the German invasion, Denmark's only documentary unit, Minerva Film, had only a few films to its credit, though these included some medical films by Axel Lerche, and Theodor Christensen's documentary on the building of the Trans-Iranian railway, sponsored by Kampsex, the Danish film of civil engineers.

When the Germans smashed into Denmark, her film technicians were faced with two alternatives. Should they abandon their screens to the Germans, hand over their film studios and cutting rooms, and allow their film culture to be wiped out? Or should they attempt to hold their industry in their own hands, keeping alive some of the essential qualities of Danish life and ideals? Like their comrades in France and other occupied countries they chose the latter course. The Government decided to help, and two authorities were charged to sponsor documentary films-Dansk-Kulturfilm, a voluntary body supported out of public funds in the form of a tax on cinemas, and Ministeriernes Filmudvalg, the Film Committee of the Danish Government. The former approximates to the British Council, the latter to the British Central Office of Information. As in England, the production functions of Dansk Kulturfilm and Ministeriernes Filmudvalg have now been merged. Thomas P. Heijle, an educationist closely associated with the Folk High School movement and founder and director of an organization showing stage plays to school children, looked after the film work of the former. Mogens Skot-Hansen, one-time civil servant in the Danish Ministry of Education, became responsible for the films of the latter, under a committee headed by Vilhelm Boas of the Ministry of Justice. Skot-Hansen brought to the films a knowledge of civil service procedure and a sense of public purpose. To these qualities he soon

added first rate technical skill, for he quickly became not only an ingenious script-writer, but also a capable director and film editor, and an expert on non-theatrical distribution. Today he is one of the best documentary producers, and his special qualities have enabled him to find a compromise between the rigid civil service procedure and the creative freedom without which artists cannot flourish. Early in 1947 he joined the film department of UNESCO in Paris to work under John Grierson.

### **Similarities**

So, when I came to Denmark, I found a documentary school already established with strong and lively traditions of its own. I quickly felt that, even if English documentary could contribute something by pointing to technical and social paths which it might be profitable to explore, my colleagues and I in England had a great deal to learn from Denmark in return.

Before the war, Britain had evolved both the theory and practice of documentary. But in spite of such famous titles as *Drifters, Man of Aran, Night Mail. Housing Problems* and *Song of Ceylon*, British documentary did not become a mature or sizable industry till after 1941, when it became harnessed to the war effort. Danish documentary also reached maturity during the war, and the movements in the two countries, divorced from each other as they were, show remarkable resemblances. Even their differences are complementary.

The war forced both Governments to turn to the film as a method of public information and to sustain public morale. Both Governments adopted the documentary approach, though not in England till after some ludicrous attempts had been made to dish up Rule Britannia as an incentive to go to war. The five-minute film, released free of charge to the public cinemas, was introduced almost simultaneously in the two countries. Both sought to find a workable compromise between the old theory that a civil service administers and neither interprets nor creates, and the fact that films, and documentary films in particular, are interpretative and creative or nothing at all.

The differences between the two schools were as striking as their similarities. In England the documentary film became a weapon of offence. Frills and fal-lals were jettisoned. Perhaps with them went things which we could ill afford to do without. Things like humanity and humour Things which bring that warmth which is essential if there is to be a deep and sympathetic relation between the film maker and his audience. So I still feel pleased when I remember that, in the middle of the war, the Ministry of Food was persuaded not only to accept but to like Len Lye's fantasy on the Woolton pie—When the Pie was Opened. I am happy, too, to have been distantly

associated with that chunky untidy Elizabethan masterpiece, *Our Country*. As the war went on, quantity had to be put before quality; content became all important; the message—only too often solidly embodied in the commentary and absent from the visuals—became everything, and for this very reason sometimes failed to come across.

In Denmark, the documentary film became a weapon of defence. Its makers could not present the economic, political and social position as they experienced it. Had they done so, the Gestapo would have killed them. So they were forced often to deal with things of local rather than universal importance. They had to step aside from the realities of the war situation. This had an effect on their work opposite to that in England. If the English films had few frills, the Danish sometimes had too many. If the English films sacrificed form to content, it was sometimes the other way round in Denmark. If English films were often too down-to-earth and even dull, Danish films were sometimes a little too high off the ground.

The film workers in both countries are now seeking to deepen their social approach to their subject matter, to be at once more profound and critical without losing contact with their audiences. Our films must be peopled with characters who laugh, quarrel, make love, marry and beget children. They must have both grace and warmth. It is here that I think England has much to learn from Denmark, and it is for this reason that I want to touch on three particular aspects of Danish documentary films—their technical virtuosity, their humanity and their humour.

When one is with the Danish documentary people, as likely as not they will be discussing the technical side of their craft, the proper timing of a mix, the weight and effectiveness of a cut, the juxtaposition of a word and a visual, the structure and build of a sequence. This love of film for its own sake is something which I admire and respect, though sometimes it can go too far. The consequence has been that, though technically many of the films are superb and achieve a satisfying blend of picture, voice and music that any country may envy, some of them sometimes lapse into virtuosity for its own sake. For example, parts of Bjarne Henning-Jensen's two films, Paper and Sugar, suffer in this way, gay, sparkling and brilliantly put together though they be. It is not unjust to say that he has only found his mature style in Ditte, Child of the People. Again, Søren Melson was capable of making both the charming Cutter H.71 (though even here the jazz musical accompaniment seems a little strained) and The Cow which degenerates into a ballet of blood and offals. Theodor Christensen, one of the ablest film makers in Denmark, is still seeking a reconciliation between his vivid racy impressionism and the requirements of clear and pithy exposition.\* Finally, no note on the technique of Danish films would be complete without a reference to the finely conceived musical compositions accompanying many of them, and to their luminous photography.

Few Danish film directors are content with a mere statement of fact which one may take or leave. They study each new subject as a special problem on its own. They try to express their own point of view towards the theme they are

treating. They seek to make the audience feel as well as understand. They pick out special qualities and exhibit them to the audience, perhaps a fine landscape draped handsomely across the screen or a particular quality of emotion. For this reason, many of the films have point and wit and interest far beyond the bare bones of the subject. Every now and again, of course, there is a failure Hagen Hasselbalch who has made one of the best films in the whole collection, *Your Grain is in Danger*, sometimes slips his anchors and hits the moon, as in *Pan and the Girl*.

At its best, Danish documentary shows its characters in the round. They are not merely ob-

### HOLLYWOOD JABBERWOCKY

By

1. A. R. DIAMOND

'Twas ciros, and the cinelords Were lollyparsing with their babes: All goldwyns were acadawards But demille ruled the nabes.

'Beware the Jarthurank, my lad! The lion's claw, the eagle's wing! And when U-I his pix, be glad That DOS dos everything?'

He took his johnston code in hand: Long time the ranksome foe he sought— So rested he by the schary tree, And stood awhile in thought.

And as in quota-quotes he stood, The Jarthurank, of happy breed, Came boulting through the korda wood And caroled on his reed!

For sin! For shame! On cleavaged dame The censor shears went flicker-flack! He scarred the Bard, and coward marred Went gallupolling back.

'And hast thou haysed the Jarthurank? Come to my arms, my breenish boy! O date and day! Elate! L.A.!' He xenophobed with joy.

'Twas ciros, and the cinelords Were hollyparsing with their babes: All goldwyns were acadawards But demille ruled the nabes.

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served from afar off. One feels that one has met them in the flesh. The introduction of story and plot particularly in Dreyer's *Good Mothers* and Svendsen's *Health for Denmark*, is an interesting departure.

Only one group of films is unsatisfactory. This is the set of travel or tourist films. Beautifully photographed though most of them are, they seem to have been made with no audience in view, or at best for an audience that has been dead and buried these last twenty years. For they seem to be aimed at the middle-class English prewar traveller (who rarely or never saw tourist films), who used to wander across Europe, snapshotting the peasants, swarming over ruins, carrying his money in a little bag slung round his

neck for fear of thieves, and brewing tea on a spirit stove in his hotel bedroom at four o'clock. The makers of those films have not realized that the tourist of today in the main will come from the Study Group, the Youth Club, the Workers Travel Association, the trade union and the technical school. What the new travellers want to know is, what sort of people will they meet? What will they eat? Where will they stay and how much will it cost? What's the dancing like? Is the bathing good? Is there fresh water near the camping sites? I will bet a pound to a penny that Soren Melson's gay, intimate and goodhumoured People's Holiday will do more to bring people to Denmark than all the spires and towers and landscapes and ruins and eastle and historical monuments rolled into a ball and doubled.

#### Wif

There is one quality for which Denmark could give points to the documentary schools of England, France, Czechoslovakia, Canada and the USA, and still beat them: wit and humour. Film after film, particularly those tackling propaganda themes, has a neat and witty script, and imaginative presentation. With the exception of some of the British trailers, and the work of Humphrey Jennings, Len Lye, Brian Smith, and D'Arcy Cartwright, I am tempted to think that English documentary is rationed to one laugh and two smiles to every hundred films-and they don't always take up the ration at that. The Danish films scintillate with gaiety and humour. Once seen, one does not forget the crusty old gentleman in Torben Svendsen's beautiful The Seventh Age, who objects to his room mate doing physical jerks, or the old lady in the same film listening to the wedding ceremony through an ear-trumpet. One could trust Soren Melson to find the party of plump men, stripped to the waist, wearing caps, smoking cigars and playing cards under the sweltering sun in People's Holiday. Who but Bjarne Henning-Jensen would tackle such a forbidding subject as the care of the teeth by making a party of children play at being dentists and patients? Who but Mogens Skot-Hansen and Hagen Hasselbalch would have thought of making the corn weevils in The Corn is in Danger hold a committee meeting in squeaky voices to discuss how to get rid of that pest mankind!

### How can she fait?

Well, there it is. Denmark has come out of the war with a tough and lusty school of documentary. Today she is facing the problem of aligning the documentary film with the new trends of the shifting world, of finding a more stable economic film structure at home, and a more certain distribution outlet abroad. She can searcely fail How could she when she has men in the public services with an understanding of film like H. H. Koch, Henning Uriis, Dr fransen, Jorgen Dich and Blom Andersen? When she has a State distributing organization headed by I bbe Neergaard, journalist, teacher and film critic by training, with a deep knowledge and love for films? And a national sponsoring organization headed by th Koch-Olsen, a producer from Radio' And, above all, a body of sensitive and expert directors and cameramen, So, good luck, and good shooting to Ingolf Boisen, Theodor Christensen, Carl Dreyer, Hagen Hasselbalch, Biarne and Astrid Henning-Jensen, Soren Melson, Ole Palsbo, the Roos Brothers, Torben Svendsen, and to all the others who have contributed so much to the art of film in Denmark

<sup>\*</sup> Two of Christensen's most important films were made independently and are not listed below. They are a line impressionist survey of the work of the ship-building firm of Boumeister & Wain, and Det Gaelder din Frihed (Your Freedom is at Stake), a film compilation illustrating life under the Nazis up to the liberation, and based on actuality material shot secretly by members of the underground movement.

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# THE ANATOMY OF HOLLYWOOD

A PERPLEXED British judge several years ago asked 'Who *is* this Hollywood?' A California city, now part of Los Angeles, it has come to symbolize film makers and their industry. Contrary to common assumption it has begun no major trend, except in fashions. Hollywood is a reflection—out of focus and in technicolor—of the American film-goers who cheered it with more than \$1,800,000,000 at the box office last year. A wit says 'Hollywood is double Dubuque'—doubly a typical city of 44,000 souls in Iowa, as in Britain one might refer to a 'double Wigan'.

Hollywood is young. The community was only a hamlet 30 years ago. Half its top executives and artists are under 40. Their customers are of an even tenderer age. Dr George Gallup, director of Audience Research, Inc., said last March:

The average American movie audience is predominantly a young audience. The nineteen-year-old contributes more to the box office than any other age group. Regular movie attendance seems to begin around the age of twelve. It goes up steadily through the age of nineteen. After that it falls off sharply. Relatively few persons attend the movies with any regularity after the age of thirty-five . . .

He adds that out of 143 million American, 90 million are *able* to go to the cinema. Only 58 million of these attend at least once every three weeks; but there are 80 million *weekly* admissions because of habitual 'repeaters'. Men and boys attend as frequently as women and girls. The 17,000 US theatres are in 10,238 cities and towns. Most of these are in the populous, industrialized north-eastern third of the country, which includes much of the Mid-west.

### Standardization is the Key to Mass-Production

One reason Hollywood has 'gone over big' is that it tailors its films to fit millions of people. Some that seem shapeless are pinned together with a bit of everything that is 'box-office'i.e. that will attract crowds. Others, unadorned with substance, have been stripped of all that could offend. In short they are like American cheese: good enough to lure lovers of cheese when they can't get the best, but not rank enough to affront potential eaters. Hollywood could build on this broad foundation of appeal because so many Americans, with their high income, can afford to attend the cinema. So, like other 'opiates of the masses'—the Press and radio— Hollywood offers the mean of what is common to all. As common denominator of 'the American Way' it appeals to the young who are always anxious to follow and (in their own slang) to stay 'in the groove'.

Hollywood has capitalized the American folkmyth that an individual through work, luck, and a pure heart can climb to dizzy heights. Few have reached the pinnacle, but at any rate the millions can have the next best thing: for ninety minutes of transfiguration they can become a Myrna Loy or Clark Gable, uninhibited, perfect, triumphant in life and love. Filmgoers live in an everyday environment of keen competition, monotony and frustration. Every day they

struggle for supremacy in deeds and possessions. The tension thus generated is released at the theatre. On the screen, life is good, right and simple. The guy who cheats at cards, or kisses Gable's girl, is inevitably condemned 'up the river' (up the Hudson River to Sing Sing prison in New York State) or (worse) to eternal celibacy.

### The Menu of Film-Fare

Hollywood's biggest assets are its stars. They are worshipped not as actors but as ordinary people who have similarly risen *per ardua ad astra*. The wealth and plenty lavished on them is a right and proper reward of upward struggle, as it also is for wealthy businessmen. Hollywood's deity today is singing, kidding, easy-going, average-guy Bing Crosby. Bing's 'fans' (from the word 'fanatic') go to the films to see Bing, and not the character of priest or gold prospector which he portrays. They do not see an actor or his acting. Some stars even feel slighted if they become famous as the characters they create, rather than as themselves.

In a country where the unusual is usual and the impossible is always happening, exaggeration is a simple colloquialism. Much of the unreality in Hollywood films is therefore taken by Americans with a laugh; but the British, who venerate understatement, are dismayed by it. Conversely, the slow, diffident, undramatized realism of good British films and their characters seems pedestrian to many an American who enjoys high-speed heroics, slapstick, and sledge-hammer drama, with all the characters 'overtyped'.

The least plausible of standard US film-fare are perhaps the 'Westerns' or 'horse operas'. These make up 54 per cent of Hollywood's output, They are seldom seen in the big theatres in the cities, but appear regularly in out-of-the-way places and small towns. Strangely enough they are a smash-hit in the West itself, where modern ranch hands delight in seeing cow-ponies gallop twenty miles without ill effects. But these 'sagebrush sagas' are mainly supported by the very young, who after school and even in summer don their spurs to join forces with Hollywood's brave and true cowboys. The audience is a bedlam of youngsters cheering, taking pot-shots with cap-pistols at villains and overcoming all dangers in an afternoon of hard and fast riding. Villainy never wins. Virtue always does. If this is bad for youth, it can only be because adult life is never as fair!

### The Psychology of Realism and Escapism

Millions of Americans will go to any movie. Many of them want relaxation, not entertainment; and some sit and sleep. As Dr Philip J. Rulon, acting Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, said on February 25th: 'This may prove they are tired, but it cannot prove they are dumb.' Hollywood's success is also partly because habitual film-goers become dependent on films and radio for 'canned' amuse-

ment. Because of this, Hollywood to the delight of its youthful fans continually tries to out-do itself. American producers *have* made good pictures, but some of their best just turned into 'box-office poison'. One, 'The Ox-Bow Incident', an excellent drama of a lynching, barely made a box-office ripple.

The screen, therefore, keeps behind the public taste. Producers prefer to use a successful idea over and over again to protect their enormous investment. Self-imitation also affects the plot. Hence the epidemic of 'animal epics' and 'psychological thrillers'. Bette Davis was neurotic yet a hit, two years ago in 'Now, Voyager'. So today, Laraine Day is a kleptomaniac in 'The Locket' and Joan Crawford, who was only slightly disturbed mentally in 'Mildred Pierce', goes completely 'off her trolley' in 'Possessed'. Some star who went 'nuts' in celluloid will probably win the 1947 awards for acting—unless, of course, they get nosed out at the winning post by a horse, dog, or other mammal.

Hollywood is subject to pressure groups and 'lobbies' ranging from political interests to the Glass Bottle Blowers Association, which complained when Gary Cooper drank canned beer (see 'The Art of Lobbying' in A.O. No 17, p. 167). Criticism has also been on moral grounds; but most of that is negative. It resulted in the Motion Picture Association's moral code, equally negative, which was devised to stave off Government regulation. But the code has not silenced vast numbers of still indignant religious, women's and educational organizations. Most of these groups attack the screen for setting a pace, whereas, if anything, it follows the public too much. They fail to see Hollywood's chief criticizable influence: its cutting of dies out of certain vulgar patterns in American life and its crushingly repetitive die-stamping of them, in reverse, on the cinema-going public. Sociologist Leo T. Rosten wrote in his study Hollywood 'Whether the movies imitate life, or whether life imitates the movies, is for others to decide; this writer believes that, like missionaries on a desert island, they begin to convert each other.'

### Bigger and Better Business

Eight gigantic producing companies, known as the 'majors', dominate Hollywood. They are largely controlled by eastern (New York, etc.) capital. All except United Artists, Inc. are members of the Motion Picture Association of America, Inc., of which Eric Johnston—former President of the US Chamber of Commerce—is president. But United Artists joins the others to help form the Motion Picture Export Association, Inc., also headed by Johnston.

Today the whole US film industry is caught between rising costs and a shrunken home market. American films grossed \$2,700 million at America's and the world's box offices in 1946, a 10 per cent rise over 1945. Out of this, the seven MPA majors netted \$120 million as compared to a \$65 million net in 1945. Variety, leading entertainment magazine, reported on December 18th, 1946, that 64 per cent of this gain

(\$35 million) was the big seven's savings as a result of Congressional action which erased the Government excess profits tax at the outset of 1946. But costs of production in 1946 soared to \$413 million for just over 400 pictures, a 25 per cent rise in a year. And to cap it all, US box-office receipts have skidded from what the Wall Street Journal calls the 'super colossal' to the 'mere colossal'. Typical estimates point to a slump of 12 to 20 per cent so far this year.

### Mr Erie Johnston and his Influence

Hollywood films scooped \$900 million gross from the foreign market last year, or 35 per cent of their gross total. Almost \$400 million gross eame from the UK. The advent of Johnston to the MPA showed the concern for this market. He was preceded by Will Hays, a political intimate of President Warren G. Harding. Hays' function was to protect Hollywood interests on the domestic front. (The code for moral suitability of films was administered by the famous 'Hays Office'.) Johnston, however, is a political theorist and businessman. As former President of the US Chamber of Commerce he has contacts all over the world. Last fall he adopted a 'get tough' policy with the MPEA urging them to export only select films and abandon such offensive practices as stereotyped portrayals-e.g. Englishmen who always wear monocles and look, and are, silly. He is highly aware of the competition US films face from British pictures in such territory as Latin America, and is convinced that Hollywood must help its country meet the threat of Soviet power. He has repeatedly told MPA members that US films must carry the message of free enterprise to the world. (Hollywood's reaction to this, so far, has been one of deep astonishment.) Meanwhile Johnston is working closely with his friends Will Clayton, Under-Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, and William Benton, Assistant Secretary of State, as well as with Secretary of State Marshall to advance the international exchange of films (A.O. No 4, p. 34). This, and the fact that he has been mentioned as a possible Republican Vice-Presidential partner with Governor Dewey in 1948, makes him one of Hollywood's prize personalities.

# British and American Films in Each Other's Country

American films reaped approximately £16,750,000 net from the United Kingdom, while British products only nipped about \$8,500,000 net from the US market. Even so, Hollywood's net income from the UK was only 17 per cent of its gross income in the UK. The rest remained in Britain for distribution, exhibition, taxes, etc. Therefore the 'majors' were busily buying shares in British and other foreign theatres and distribution chains. Profits from these investments will be clipped by the new cut in British film imports, but the new British ban on transfer of more than a quarter of US film *profits* into dollars will put an abrupt stop on 'direct' investments in the British film trade.

The big Hollywood companies have profited directly by importing British films into the US since 95 per cent of the US film industry's capital of \$2,600 million is in theatres. Here, too, are most of the profits. Despite eight years of the US Government's anti-trust action against them in the courts—for monopolistic practices—the eight 'majors' control 73 per cent of the theatres in 92 eities with a population of more than 100,000 each. They also dominate 16 per cent of all US theatres, and hold shares in thousands

(\$35 million) was the big seven's savings as a result of Congressional action which erased the Government excess profits tax at the outset of 1947, but not in 1948.

So with eyes on the profits British films will make in US theatres, as well as on the benefits of trade, five major US theatre circuits last June handed to Mr J. Arthur Rank play-dates (engagements) totalling \$12 million yearly. The agreement provided that only the best of British films be shown. This was the first real chance British films had to compete in America as a whole with the home product.

### Would British Films have Succeeded?

'Stix still nix Brit pix despite crix': in Hollywood lingo this means British films will not have an easy time drawing American crowds. (Stix means sticks, backwoods, rural areas and small cities; nix means negative towards; Brit, British; pix, pictures; and crix, critics or newspaper columnists, who have generally been favourable to London products.) Variety, after an exhaustive coast-to-coast survey, stated on June 18th:

Most sections of the country, in fact, virtually every section except the metropolitan centres along both coasts, are continuing to exhibit the same time-old allergy to foreign films which was evidenced before the war. The principal difference is that there are more exceptions . . . such as the British *Henry V*.

Yet there is an undercurrent of apprehension in certain segments of the American film industry over the excellence of recent British films. This misgiving is magnified by the home box-office slump. The MPA claims it is an economic sign of the times. Admission prices are an average of 47 cents, a 50 per cent increase in six years. But producers note that good films still get the biggest crowds. And the thirty-two million Americans who remain potential film-goers are still there. Many of Hollywood's grade-B pictures may therefore soon guit the screen. The Government's anti-trust suit against the 'majors' has reached the US Supreme Court. If the Government is upheld, producers will be enjoined, among other restrictions, from compelling theatres to buy a block of grade-B pictures with each grade-A

### Film Finance and Film Quality

A writer or musican in Hollywood can earn \$2,000 a week and then go unemployed for months. Most producers have made a million and have also lost one. Hollywood is not as jaunty as it seems. It is basically timid and shrewd. The fate of the 'independent studios' shows this. Last year one-third of all US films were 'shot' by independents. Many 'indies' were formed by directors and actors whose 'artistic freedom' boiled down to selling their company after it had made one picture, because that way they had to pay only a 25 per cent capital gains tax instead of an income tax as high as 60 to 80 per cent! And independents are never free from the 'majors' anyway; for 'majors' take over the distribution and exhibition of their films. Today, because of the general economic uncertainty, the 'indies' are scampering back to the 'majors' fold.

But even the 'majors' have to have financing. The Guaranty Trust of New York, one of Hollywood's biggest financiers, has practically withdrawn from the film business. The Wall Street Journal reported on May 20th 'A New York banker who makes a lot of loans to Hollywood explained that his institution now insists on the best talent, and even then will loan only

50 to 60 per cent of production costs. A year ago it would have loaned 60 to 70 per cent even though producers and actors weren't top-level." Because of this, Hollywood has doubled its efforts to cut costs. Ironically, it has for twenty years fostered public taste for fabulous settings. Now it looks with interest at the realism British films achieve with flimsy sets. Hollywood has also cut its personnel from 30,000 to 21,000 in a year. The re-issuing of old films has been another money-saver. Today all 'majors' withdraw popular pictures in time to protect their future profits on re-issuing them. More than ever, Hollywood seeks to protect its enormous investment by filming best-selling books and plays, (Only half of all screen stories are original; popular plots are used over and over again with new titles.) Paramount financed the 'legitimate stage' production of Broadway's Pulitzer Prize play 'State of the Union' with \$300,000 just to obtain the film rights. Some producers are even trying to 'capture' popular books and songs by buying shares in publishing houses and gramophone record companies.

#### The British Blow at Hollywood and the Future

Now, at the British Government's penal emergency tax on its UK profits, Hollywood professes itself thunderstruck. It has thunderstruck back (through the MPEA) by banning exports of new US films to Britain. The tax roused more resentment in Hollywood than an outright British ban on imports of US films; for, somewhat querulously and partially, Hollywood spokesmen complained that HM Government had given them no 'tip-off', and they had only expected, at worst, a new tax of 25 to 50 per cent not a full 75 per cent. Hollywood's hope is that British film fans and theatre owners, plus possible State Department pressure on the British authorities, will modify the tax. In this connection, Mr Eric Johnston's personal relations with the State Department should not be overlooked.

The chief fear in Hollywood is that the British action will set an example to other dollar-short countries—who multiply daily. Reorganization of the whole US film business is now necessary because of the interdependence of domestic and foreign business. Hollywood is too confused at present to chart its course. One 'independent' producer said, 'I think it's the worst crisis in Hollywood's history.' Many producers, especially 'independents', claim that their earnings in the US cover only their film production costs, or even a fraction of their costs. All their profits, and possibly some coverage of costs, came from earnings abroad, above all in Britain. The 'majors' are better off because they get profits from their own theatres even if their production costs are not met.

The chances are that US retaliation will not stop the Rank play-dates because there are six months' supplies of untaxable US films now in Britain plus possible re-issues of old films. Thus 1947 profits may be untouched by the British action last week. But all the trends hitherto obvious—resulting from rising costs and slower box-office returns will be intensified Hollywood is expected to redouble its efforts to open the Latin American and South African markets. This sudden British sharpening of Hollywood's difficulties in financing coincides with difficulties in cutting costs—labour unions in Hollywood are very strong. So more tilming abroad is probable, especially south of California

# GOVERNMENT FILM-MAKING IN AUSTRALIA

# By

### **Edward Cranstone**

IN July, 1945, the Australian Commonwealth Government took the step forward in their film-producing policy of forming a National Film Board, and appointing to it as Films Commissioner, Ralph Foster, of the National Film Board, Canada.

In deciding to mould their film-making activities on the pattern of their sister Dominion they could not have done better, for Foster brought to Australia some of the vitality and organization of what is perhaps today the ideal set-up for the production and distribution of Government films. The production of Australian Government films had not previously been on a scale comparable with other countries, and the films produced, usually two or three a year, had been made under the administration of the Department of Commerce, chiefly to advertise agricultural products overseas. They were boringly factual and their commentaries were freely interspersed with the words 'Now we see—'.

With the advent of the war in 1939, the Films Division went over to the newly-formed Department of Information, which, being largely comprised of newspaper men, was apathetic about the use of film, concentrating their propaganda mediums rather on still photography and journalism, Later they sent a cameraman to the Middle East. They did not know at the time that this obscure young man was to become a world-famous name in the sphere of war photography. The young cameraman was Damien Parer.

The material sent back by the war cameramen was, by mutual arrangement, sent straight to the newsreels, where it was processed and edited. Although this solved the distribution problem, it is doubtful if it served the best interests of the nation; for it gave the privately-owned newsreel companies the right to use the material how and if they liked. Indeed, much splendid material never saw the screen because of prejudice against an 'unknown photographer'.

This prejudice can be understood in the light of the Government's refusal to allow newsreel men to operate in war areas. Harmony was restored eventually when several of the 'old school' newsreel men were engaged by the Department as war cameramen, and the companies felt that their prestige had been restored. However, when the Japs were thundering at Australia's front door in 1942, and the most thrilling of all Australian newsreels hit the screen, namely *Kokoda Trail*, it was not shot by the 'old school', but by the obscure young man, Damien Parer. Unfortunately for films, Parer was killed in action in September, 1944.

When the war ended, the Australian War Memorial was far-sighted enough to collect from the newsreels all material that had been shot, and fortunately it is now preserved for posterity.

Today the Government Films Division is organized on a better footing than ever before.

Not equalling its Canadian counterpart in size or scope, it is nevertheless built on a sound foundation and can look forward to expansion in the future. One of Ralph Foster's first tasks was to find new personnel for the enlarged Department. He enlisted enthusiastic young people released from the Forces, to train as scriptwriters, production assistants, etc., and sought out technicians who had drifted away from the Department during the war. He found new directors and was assisted in this fask by such men as Harry Watt and Joris Ivens, who were in Australia at the time. One of these young directors, John Heyer, worked with Watt on The Overlanders. Units were formed and the task was begun of implementing the programme recommended by the Film Board. Films included both subjects suggested by the Department of Information and those sponsored by other bodies.

As the units were necessarily widely dispersed, the need was felt for a Chief Producer, who could act as a co-ordinator for all units and a liaison between technicians and administration. The man chosen for this post was Stanley Hawes, well-known documentary man who had worked with Grierson both in England and Canada. Stanley Hawes, with his sympathetic approach and keen sense of discrimination, did much to guide the young documentary makers on a steady course and to assist the older members to

a documentary approach.

Naturally the new Films Division is suffering the growing pains that all similar organizations are prone to. Inability to obtain apparatus for the expanded personnel, lack of adequate working space, transport difficulties (no mean factor in Australia's open spaces), film stock shortages and, of course, the petty squabbles and jealousies that are found so often in creative circles. Gradually difficulties are being ironed out and months of hard work have borne fruit; films are emerging that should bear comparison with documentaries anywhere. Indeed, two of the films have been acquired by MGM for world release and others are under consideration. Native Earth, the first, deals with the Labour Government's new deal for the natives of New Guinea, while the second, Journey of a Nation, deals with the problem of transport bottlenecks, caused by Australia's broken gauge railway system. Three 16 mm Kodachrome subjects, Turn the Soil, Men and Mobs, and Born in the Sun, have been turned out for the Department of Commerce, and, although the subjects are the same as of old—wheat, sheep and dried fruits they have been given an entirely new interest by the use of an historical approach. The soft colour of Australia's sombre background, with much attention given to typical sound and voices, give to the films that spirit of nationalism which might be expected in the Government pro duced film. Namatjira, also in Kodachrome, de picts the life of the Australian aboriginal. It is

shot entirely in Central Australia, using as actors only the natives themselves. The unusual music, based on aboriginal themes, is by a very young composer, Charles Mackerras, who is now in London. Stanley Hawes contributes a delightful effort called School in the Mailbox, about the education by correspondence of the out-back child; while Watch over Japan deals with Australia's role in the Japanese occupation. Three films, Men Wanted, Street in Suburbia and Nuriootpa, are sponsored by the Department of Immigration, and a series called Australian Diary is produced by the Department of Information itself. Other films produced from within the Department show life in Australian towns and cities and Australian sports and pastimes. Some of these have been severely criticized as 'tourist' films and much space has been devoted to discussion in newspapers and periodicals by writers who are anxious that the way of the new National Film Board will be along the road to reality and not in the romantic backwaters of past errors. If this sort of healthy discussion and criticism continues, so much the better for Australian film making, as it is only by taking an active interest in the work of their Governments that people anywhere can expect results.

### (Continued from page 141)

in Mexico where labour is cheap. Many US producers who had counted on good revenues from Britain are caught with costly pictures on their hands, e.g. the \$6,000,000 'Forever Amber'. Economy must now be the order of the day.

### Better US Films

Fewer and better US pictures may capture more of the home and Canadian markets, but because of high costs the absolute number of pictures produced must now be cut, especially those in grade B. Longer runs in the theatres for each film are also forecast, and ever more frequent re-issues (though the latter quickly show 'diminishing returns'). Finally there is film technology. Will it come to Hollywood's aid? An expert motion-picture technological correspondent reports to us from Hollywood that this cannot be taken for granted. Nothing unusual is expected for the next five to ten years Steady and unspectacular improvements in sound and photography are all that's foreseen The much-talked-of three-dimensional movies cannot even be said to be in the laboratory stage yet. The US Navy developed the tridimensiona photograph; but the inventor only says it 'may be adaptable to motion pictures.

Thus for severely practical reasons, better American films *may* soon unroll. But it is still unsure if they *will*. The natives of Hollywood have learned to believe nothing they hear any only half they see. And the British may not ever see American films at all!

# NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

HOW AN AEROPLANE FLIES

Part I. Lift

Part 11. Drag

Part VI. Controls

Made by Shell Film Unit. Camera: Sidney Beadle. Animation: Francis Rodker and A. J. Shaw.

These three self-contained parts of Shell's new films on aerodynamics, for the use of students of aviation, flying personnel and ground staff in training, and senior forms in schools, were previewed in August. The remaining three parts will be completed shortly. The three parts shown represent a considerable achievement on the part of the team which planned and made them, among whom were Sydney Beadle, photography, John Rodker and A. J. Shaw, diagrams. They are, in fact, first-class teaching films which physics and general science masters will find of the utmost value for their senior forms-age group 13 + if belonging to A stream; though they will be more appreciated by 14 and 15-year-olds who are able to think in abstract terms.

Yet, while the ability to think in abstract terms and to understand abstract principles is necessary in the student who is going to learn most from these films, the empirical method has been very rightly used. Progressing from the known to the unknown and proving the latter in terms of the former, is the accepted practice among the most advanced teachers; it is also the essence of good instructional film-making in my opinion, especially in the realms of physics and general science.

Part I—Lift, shows how an aeroplane actually rises and remains airborne, a mystery many scientists from Icarus and Leonardo da Vinci onwards have guessed at but never been able to control. The introductory sequences, showing the action of the wind above and below the flat surface of a piece of paper and of leaves fluttering to the ground, are admirably done, though they are perhaps over-long. The 'known' in this case is so easily recognized and understood that it could have been cut down by several examples and a longer time spent on the 'unknown', the Venturi tube and the effect of the change in air pressure on the upper and lower wings, which controls the force which keeps the acroplane in the air.

How much the amount of lift is governed by the angle of the wing is also shown clearly. Diagram and model are ingeniously used, sometimes in conjunction with each other as in most Shell films.

Part II—Drag, is the simplest of the three films to grasp at one showing; it could also have been reduced to the standard length of one reel, which to my mind makes a good maximum length for a direct teaching film. (Part I is 1\frac{1}{4} reels in length; Part II 1\frac{1}{2} reels and Part VI I reel.)

Drag shows the wind's resistance to forward movement, first of the human body and then of an aeroplane. Technical construction, such as stream-lining, is shown as reducing this impediment to speed.

Part VI—Controls, surprises by the apparent simplicity by which an aeroplane is controlled, but this apparent simplicity is misleading. The control of an aircraft is shown to be an exact science based on precise knowledge of the effect of the slightest pressure on the elevators and the control surfaces at the wing tips which will change the aircraft's motion and direction from dive to climb, from bank to roll, from a straight course to a sharp turn....

This film has less than the other two of the gradual build-up technique and is perhaps the least satisfactory for that reason, although its lessons are taught clearly and well, with no burking of the difficult flying shots.

After seeing these three films I am more than ever convinced that the Shell Unit are making some of the best educational films of today, and have a good deal to teach the rest of us who are working in this difficult field about good, clear, sound instructional film technique.

AN EDUCATIONAL FILM PRODUCER

Convection, Conduction and Radiation. Realist for British Gas Council in association with Film Centre. *Direction and Photography*: Alec Strasser. *Distribution*: British Gas Council. 8 mins, each film.

While the Committees have been conferring. British Gas Council and Realist have acted. Strasser, Bennell, Parsons, Dorothy Grayson (which of them to single out for credit who can say? Let's think of it as a team) have produced abiding models of what teaching films should be. Each of these three films is made up of a series of short sequences which take us step by step towards an understanding of the subject. Each sequence ends with a question which it leaves the audience to answer. In other words, here are three films which can be shown together, or separately, or in bits-according to the requirements and capabilities of teacher, class and curriculum. What is perhaps even more impressive, the short sequences (some of which may not run to more than half-a-dozen shots) are devised with quite outstanding imagination. Going back to the words with which this review opened, it seems likely that to Alcc Strasser must go the lion's share of the bouquets. There was real genius in Your Children's Eyes - that fantastie and vet completely logical sequence of the orange and there is genius here again. All this may sound too much of a panegyric. Of course, the films aren't perfect; of course, everybody, including Realist, has a lot to learn about making teaching films (for example, the spoken word was perhaps over-complicated, and its delivery oddly inhuman), but even if we must proceed in arithmetical progression before we finally reach a perfect standard, at least Realist has found something which has eluded everyone else, the first term to start us on the way. Committee B has emitted many vague pages adumbrating, in what they think to be specific terms, which no producer must dare to contradict, some scores of films they want to make In fairness to the

teachers they represent, and to the producers whom they apparently dismiss as amateurs, they should see *Convection, Conduction and Radiation*. They might learn a lot.

Twenty-four Square Miles, Basic for COL Production: R. K. Neilson Baxter, Direction, Kay Mander, Photography: A. Englander, Editing: Adam Dawson Animation: Cynthia Whitby Model: J. P. McCrum, Distribution: Non-Theatrical, 43 mins.

The twenty-four square miles are a section of Oxfordshire covered by one sheet of the 6 in. ordnance survey map. The film illustrates a detailed survey of this once made by the Agricultural Economics Research Institute of the University of Oxford in 1943. Everything is covered: occupations, housing and public services, education, entertainments, local government. It is rather surprising that the point of view of farm workers as such is not dealt with: for instance, the tied cottage—important in any consideration of rural problems is not mentioned. But, by and large, the facts are given honestly and thoroughly, even if the super-objectivity of the presentation makes for flatness.

Technical execution is very good. The director has managed in very short scenes, to capture unerringly the atmosphere of village whistdrives, Women's Institute lectures and Parish Council meetings. Both photography and cutting are crisp and to the point. Two weaknesses stand out. One is the use of the large contour map. Were this confined to an explanation of the layout of the area in its various aspects, the only complaint could be of an occasional lack of clarity in the direction. Unfortunately, the map is also used to cover statistics and other commentary points which could more clearly and more excitingly have been put over by actuality shots. The other weakness is in the effects track, which never quite makes up its mind whether to be there or not.

The great problem is to discover why, in spite of thoroughness, honesty, and technical excellence, the film remains unsatisfying. To those actively engaged on planning, it will be an invaluable work of reference. But reference works are for specialists. The conviction, the imagination that will arouse interest and will give a broad understanding have no place in them. The Layman is apt to gain from this perusal only an impression of a lot of facts and figures, and perhaps a memory of some of the main headings A more compelling picture of the problems of rural reconstruction might have been achieved by taking a smaller area -say a single vil ageand giving it a fuller, warmer, more intimate treatment. But even using all of the twenty-four square miles, some positive feeling might have resulted from keying all the analysis to some definite activity or project. As it is, the layman is likely to walk out feeling 'Most interesting, and all very complex and difficult', and then forget

Owing to lack of space some reviews have been held over for the next issue.

Correction on last issue's review of Take Thou'it should have read 'Production R K Ne Ison Baxter'; our apologies to Basic Lilm Unit

# AUDIENCE RESEARCH -FREE DISCUSSION

## By a member of Shell Film Unit

AT the Shell Film Unit in May, 1947, we showed the first two of a series of six films on 'How an Aeroplane Flies' to an audience of thirty schoolboys of matriculation standard. The idea was to find out how the techniques employed would be received, and how they would think the films could be improved.

The thirty boys, who were on the science side of a London school, were accompanied by their senior and junior science masters. The other adults in the audience included the producer. the three co-directors of five of the series of six films, and an observer from the Institute of Human Relations. None of the boys had any extensive knowledge of aerodynamics, though some had flown and two had recently joined the ATC.

It was decided that since the questionnaire method had already been tried on other audiences in respect of one of the films (Lift), free discussion should be tried out on this occasion. (An account of the 'questionnaire' experiment was published in DNL Vol. 6, 51st issue.)

The afternoon was conducted as follows. First the fact that experts in the subject were consulted during the making of the films was explained to the audience, and they were invited to consider themselves as a group of experts who were there to suggest how the films could be improved. Lift was then projected. Discussion on Lift followed for about twenty minutes, after which there was a break for tea (the appropriate time having arrived) and then Drag was projected and afterwards discussed for about half an hour,

The free discussion form of audience-reaction test provides no objective standards or statistical answers such as can be obtained from a questionnaire, and a summary of conclusions can only be a subjective one and to a certain extent personal to the observer.

As far as could be judged, all the boys were keen to help with the experiment, and (after a little initial shyness) were not abashed by the presence of strange adults.

The two films, Lift and Drag were made with this type of audience as their lowest intended agegroup, and are also destined for use in training air crews and ground staff. Lift employs simple analogies (e.g. boys marching between benches forming a narrow gap to explain Venturi effect), a good deal of demonstration apparatus (e.g. a wind machine directing a stream of air over a model wing to which pressure gauges are connected to show the variations in pressure on the upper and lower surfaces), and some shots of aeroplanes in flight, stalling and landing. The commentary in both films is simple and direct. No music or effects are used. Lift employs no diagrams; but in Drag several diagrams are used, the use of analogy is slightly increased, and there are more actuality shots of aircraft. Drag was shown in the cutting copy (run double-headed), which was in a fairly complete state, opticals

Lift was shown. The two films are of approximately the same length—sixteen minutes each.

The most encouraging thing (from the filmmaker's point of view) was that both films apparently promoted a desire for further knowledge of the subject. After seeing Lift a hot discussion raged on what happened when an aeroplane went vertically upwards; after Drag there was quite a bit of argument about the terms 'resistance' and 'drag' which the boys did not regard as synony-

There was (especially during the second film) a very keen noting of points of detail—'The oars would be deeper in the water' (of a shot showing the swirls made in water by oars); 'One of the weights' (on a balance) 'seemed to be a different size from the rest', 'When you had the oil in a beaker and water in a beaker and air in a beaker. you put the rod into the air beaker and said it wasn't so sticky, and a drop of water came out' (fell off the glass rod which had just been in the water beaker). 'You didn't say the flaps had dropped' (of a stop-frame shot of an aeroplane landing).

In fact, nothing escaped their eagle eyes, which amply confirms the fact that 'It'll get by' is not good enough.

An important point concerned tempo and construction. The film Lift, because of the nature of its content, goes straight through from beginning to end, without definite breaks. Drag on the other hand is broken by section titles into a short introduction and three sections, and concludes with a summary. After the showing of Lift there was a general feeling that the film was 'a bit fast'. On analysis this proved to mean, not that too little time was spent on each point, but that the points came too quickly on top of one another. The demand was for more breathing space: 'It didn't give much time for each point to sink in.' 'It was a bit fast, I didn't feel I could do with the four' (five) 'other films.' There was general agreement that the section titles in Drag overcame these difficulties, which serves to emphasize that instructional films must be punctuated. Simple section titles are apparently good punctuation marks, but it was agreed that wordy titles are undesirable; for instance one boy suggested that there should be a title mentioning all the mainpoints at the end of each film. He was howled down by his companions, and then said that it would not be a good idea.

One boy had 'close-up trouble'. He complained that he saw a man walk up to an aeroplane, and then the man was 'taken away and we only saw his hand', an interestingly naive way of describing the cut from mid-shot to close-up, reminiscent of the cry 'Where are their feet?' which is said to have gone up when D. W. Griffith invented the close-up. In general, however, this audience appeared not to share this trouble, being normally conditioned to cinema. It is interesting, however, that this isolated instance of close-up trouble having already been cut in. A married print of occurred on a close-up of a hand; there was ap-

parently no difficulty over elose-ups of faces, which are far more eommon on feature films than are close-ups of other parts of the body,

More serious was the complaint that (of Drag) 'the film darted about from place to place too much'. On analysis, this was found to concern a sequence of wind-machine and balance demonstration in which (after the general set-up had been established) close-ups of the scale pan, the pointer and the object whose drag was being measured were intercut fairly rapidly. The boys agreed that they wanted to 'stand back and watch the whole experiment'. At the same time they criticized the 'waste of time watching all the weights go on the scale pan one by one', so it is apparent that the determination of correct tempo depends largely on the degree of obviousness of the point being made. This is bound to vary with different audiences. This came out very clearly in discussion of a graph illustrating the fact that the drag of a given object varies as the square of the velocity. In the film this graph was slowly built up from experimental evidence obtained in the preceding sequence. Long before it really looked like a graph, the boys were muttering impatiently, anticipating the final form of the diagram, and in subsequent discussion it came out that the boys were accustomed to graphical methods of dealing with these sort of data, and would have been prepared to leap straight from the experiment to the finished graph without intermediate steps. With another audience the intermediate steps might have been essential, and it is quite probable that to be ahead of the instruction once in a while is no bad thing.

It was at this stage that it became evident that this class of boys were conscious of themselves as a group—they discussed the effect that certain sequences were likely to have on people younger or older than themselves, and asked what sort of people the films were made for.

The audience were critical of certain diagrams and water-flow shots in which white dashes or dark particles moved right across screen. They complained that these were 'hard on the eyes' and that 'it was hard to concentrate on the particles—hard for the eyes to follow—the whole screen seemed to run away from you."

Although there is little concrete justification in the notes of this discussion, certain doubts were raised in the minds of the film-makers on the real value of the visual analogy technique. On the whole the images that stuck in the minds of the members of this audience were the direct examples rather than the analogies-a sequence showing stream-lined and non-streamlined objects in an air flow made visible by smoke, for instance, had far greater impact than the analogy of a sliding pack of eards which illustrated the behaviour of air layers in the boundary region of an aircraft's skin.

Again, the brief appearance of a very personable young woman struggling against the wind at the beginning of *Drag* caused quite a stir, but it is loubtful whether she alone made the point. Nevertheless, she probably served a useful purose in creating interest and a desire to watch the creen-teachers sometimes employ shock tactics o force the attention of a class, and this particuar sequence can be justified on this score.

To sum up, it is evident (if indeed it is not wellnown already) that films of this kind should be unctuated and divided into sections; that the iming should allow breathing space, but should ot be so leisurely that the audience gets irritatngly far ahead of the film; that the greatest posible care should be taken to lead the eye to the ight place in the screen; that screen geography between shots) should be a matter of the utmost oncern, and that no mistakes or incongruities hould be permitted. The whole question of nalogy in instructional films deserves careful xamination. Twentieth century physics relies ess and less on sense-experience and sensenalogy, and it is probable that a too-lavish use f analogy in films and other teaching media is efinitely harmful.

We, the film makers, learned, or were firmly eminded of, all these points, but the main result f the afternoon was that we were greatly stimuited. This close contact with a real live audience, ist at the stage of cutting when one never wants see the film again, gave us a fine injection of esh enthusiasm. And we doubt if we should ave experienced such candour, such quickness n the point, and such easy discipline of discusion had we assembled thirty adult aerodynamiists to give us their opinion of the films.

For this stimulation alone, the experiment was ell worth while, and this method (in contrast to ne questionnaire method) is within the reach of ny production unit, and might well be tried at or ear the end of every film of this type.

### CENTRAL OFFICE OF INFORMATION SCRIPTWRITING COMPETITION

The Central Office of Information is holding a competition for documentary film scriptwriters. While established film-writers are not barred from competing, the purpose of the competition is to discover new talent among free-lance writers.

The competition is open to all, except employees of the Central Office of Information.

Competitors are required to write a full treatment for a short film on ONE of the following subjects:

'Face the Facts': a film about Britain's postwar economic problems.

'Get Home Safe and Sound': a film to encourage all road users-drivers and pedestrians—to co-operate in avoiding accidents. 'Portrait of an Englishman': a film which says something about the English character, for overseas audiences.

The films should preferably be one reel (about ten minutes) in length, and should certainly not be longer than two reels (twenty minutes).

A first prize of £75 and a second prize of £50 will be awarded by the judges.

All competitors will be required to submit an entry form together with their treatment. Entry forms and full details of conditions of the competition can be obtained on application to Films Division, Central Office of Information, 81-85 Baker Street, London, W1.

Closing date will be December 1st, 1947

# FILM FACILITIES IN THE PROVINCES No. 2— LEICESTER

# BvL. HELLIWELL

place', a popular opinion not without considerable justification, for apart from its pleasing physical appearance, the city is attentive to the mental as well as the material life of its inhabitants. In the world of music and the fine arts generally it is held in high regard, and so much is going on that it is hardly possible for any intelligent and eager person not to find some outlet for his interest.

The general picture is so very satisfying that when one comes up against the exception it is with a jolt. This jolt exists in the world of the film. If you are satisfied that the film should remain only a medium of entertainment and that the prescribed forms and limits of this entertainment continue to your taste, then you will have no complaint. Should you incline to the experimental or wish to see films other than the typical Anglo-American, you will be obliged to see them privately or save up for a visit to 'Town'. In short, the commercial cinema world of this city of approximately 250,000 does not cater for any other than the general.

Possessing 29 cinemas with an approximate seating capacity of 30,000 (thus giving one seat for every 8/9 people), Leicester compares very favourably with other cities of comparable size. Statistics of numbers of visits to the cinema by each inhabitant per week are not available, but from personal observation it would appear that Lestrians are more eager patrons of the cinema than elsewhere. Perhaps then managements cannot be blamed for keeping to the stereotyped double feature or 'full supporting' programme. Sure of full houses and knowing that appreciation of any film other than 'pure' entertainment is limited, they rarely experiment.

Is it surprising, therefore, that showings of Continental and other films of an international reputation have been few and hesitant? They have been billed, but to have to withdraw a film on the third day and replace with a dated 'popular' programme is a risk managements are reluctant to take twice. The city does not possess a 'News' or repertory cinema; hence showings of factual films have been in a casual time-filling capacity without pattern or reason. These films rarely achieve the audience they deserve, nor is this audience (which undoubtedly exists) in a position to see the films it desires. Under these conditions the factual film has remained submerged and only under more courageous management will it gain a deserved reputation. Regrettably, at present, there seems no possibility of this.

The use of the film in any other capacity than entertainment is therefore left to the non-commercial world and here are two ventures that Leicester can regard with pride. The Leicester Film Society, founded in 1931 and now having 480 members, has done excellent work. The aims of the Society are summarized as '(a) the showing of important films which have not been seen in Leicester, or which have had insufficient show-

LEICESTER has the reputation of being 'a nice ing; (b) the reviving of classic films of all kinds: (c) the showing of Continental films of reasonable merit to enable members to be familiar with what is being done there; and (d) the showing of short films of especial interest. In all cases the films chosen will be of value to the student of the history, art and technique of film making'. The eagerness to experiment and depth of vision of this Society is well illustrated by the selection of films shown during the last winter. Princess Kaguya (Japan), Avalanche, Marie Louise (Switzerland), Le Jour se Leve, L'Homme qui cherche la rérité (France), Jazz Comedy (USSR). These, in addition to four outstanding USA films and 23 short films of varying types, indicate the con prehensiveness and fine judgment of the Society, the credit of which falls in a large measure to the energetic guidance of the Film Secretary, Mr. J. R. Cottrill, BA. To the latter also the Society is indebted for the excellence of its equipment, having, in addition to the latest designed 35 mm projector, continuously variable tone and volume control in the hall itself with microphone attached for commentary.

One department of the local authority also has been courageous. In 1939 the Public Libraries Committee of the City Council installed a 35 mm projector in a new branch library and, since then, with a break early in the war years, has held programmes each winter. Their intention is frankly educational through the creation of interest and, by combining films, speakers, and books on a chosen theme they aim to increase public awareness and understanding of the problems of the day.

This utilitarian use of the film is a pioneer effort to Leicester's credit; many factual films (approximately 50 are shown each winter) which otherwise would not be seen in the city, find a select but appreciative audience. The use of a speaker guiding the subject to suit local conditions enhances the value of the documentary film, a method to be commended to other authorities

Other than the above, film facilities appear to be occasional. The Education authority is making increasing use of the instructional and travel film for older scholars. The Leicester Colleges of Art and Technology make wide use of the film on subjects with which the work of the colleges is concerned, and the Vaughan College each winter holds a course of study in film history, technique and appreciation. The Museum and Art Gallery Committee is to use a 16 mm for wider appeal in its work, and other bodies, adult education, British Legion and trade associations have in their turn made occasional use of the film to put over some des red point.

To summarize, while Leicester has no reason to be ashamed of its film facilities, it is the enlightened few who carry the burden. The intense power for good inherent in the medium is not fully realized, a situation demanding a more courageous attitude on the part of the public, the commercial world and the local authority

Reprinted from the July issue by kind permission of the 'Screenwriter'

# WRITING AND REALIZATION

## By

### MEYER LEVIN

IT takes only a few minutes to write a scene in which a runaway boy wakes up on a high rocky ledge in Palestine, to find himself surrounded by sheep, with an Arab shepherd staring at him.

But when you go to make the scene, in precisely the spot you had in mind when you wrote it, you discover that the equipment-truck can only go within a few hundred yards of the rocks because the driver does not want to risk his vehicle on a ploughed field. You help lug the camera equipment the rest of the way. The shepherd who was to be there at four o'clock with the sheep is found in a meadow a mile away at four o'clock, because he says his sheep could not feed on the rocks. You push and goad the sheep, but by the time they reach the scene the cameraman decides that the light is on the hairline of departure. There may be time for just one take. Then it is discovered that the sheep simply will not stay on the rocky ledge long enough for a take. They scramble away. Finally you make the scene without the sheep.

But it isn't what you wrote. At night, worrying about it, you suddenly realize that the scene was

wrongly written. It should have been goats. So the next day you decide to try it with goats.

Although there are goatherds all over the mountain ide, there are none within four miles of this particular spot on the day you want them. You go to Tiberius and personally lift a sufficient number of goats on to the truck. You transport them. You help herd them up the hill. And after a few dozen major and minor crises, and hours of toil as a goatherd, Arab-pacifier, reflector-holder and assistant camera boy, you get the scene that was so easy to write.

The French have a word for it. They call it realization.

The realization of *Survivors*, in Palestine, was a six-month try to catch a dawn shot, scarcely an evening that wasn't spent desperately hunting for a character for tomorrow's scene, because the one who had been cast had been called away by his Youth Group for a 'hike'. Every word that was innocently typed in the script, which was written in six weeks 'from scratch', later entailed laborious hours of realization. And yet, as the writer, I could not permit myself to feel that the

final responsibility of realization could rest entirely with someone else.

In a studio set-up, it is simple for the writer to say that what he wrote was beautiful, but that after the script departed from his hands any number of people mangled and butchered it far beyond recognition. While this is usually true, there are surely times when every writer in his soul smiles at the task he has given the producers and directors, knowing that what he has so easily written is most difficult to realize, and inwardly glad that he does not have to take the responsibility for putting it on the screen.

Conversely, and more often, the writer aches with the apprehension that what he has written cannot exactly and precisely be understood, through the words themselves; he feels that any realizer, however talented, is bound to get the atmosphere or the emphasis wrong, and knows that the only true way to make films is for the writer to be present throughout the shooting and to have at least as much control as anyone else in the realization.

Few writers ever get such an opportunity. But with the increasing trend toward story-documentary technique, stimulated by the successful experiments produced during the war, these opportunities are increasing. And when Herbert Kline and I set out to make our Palestine film, it was agreed that this was to be the method. I would assume equal production responsibility and have equal production authority with him. He would direct the film, but the realization had to conform to the intention of the script.

As it worked out in practice, Kline acted as my producer while I was writing the script, I acted as his producer while he was directing the film.

It need not be imagined that this procedure is perfect and that it always works harmoniously. Nor does it mean that each takes responsibility for the merits of the other's work. In the end, the writing stands on its own and the direction stands on its own. But although the French often use the word direction, it reflects only their over-emphasis on the role of the director of films, for the realization in this type of film is truly the work of both, and I believe that writers may justifiably insist that it is part of their function in all filmmaking to have such a share in realization.

As joint producers we decided from the beginning that in the case of severely disputed scenes, where we could arrive at no agreement as to the method of filming, we would film both versions and decide which to use when we saw what they looked like on the screen. It became necessary to do this in only three or four instances.

To the making of *Survivors*, I brought a continuing interest in Palestine that had begun with my first visit to the country in 1925. I had also

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specialized, as a war correspondent, in the story of the fate of the Jews of Europe. The film, Kline and I agreed, was to show what Palestine could do for the survivors.

Kline brought to the project his experience as a story-documentary producer, being especially known for *The Forgotten Village*. But each of us had worked in the other's field, for he had collaborated on screenwriting assignments, while I had worked as a documentary film director in OWI.

Having agreed upon the theme of the story, there followed a consideration of what had to go into the story. During all my years of contact with Palestine I had collected 'must' scenes for a film about the country. On every one of my four previous trips I had discovered some view, or some activity, which I felt must eventually go into the film. And I had, in fact, first proposed the idea of a Palestine film to Kline in Spain in 1937; we had never quite let the subject drop.

I knew, for instance, that the story must show what life was like in a Palestine farm collective; it must include a horra—the settlers' dance—and it must include an aliyah—the going up to the site of a new colony, which is collectively built in a single day. It must include an illegal landing. It must include the view of the wilderness of Judea and the Dead Sea from Jerusalem-Jericho road. It must include the view of the Emek from the Haifa road. It must, of course, include the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan. It had to contain a sequence that could be played on the campus of the Hebrew University, with the awesome background of the Dead Sea on one side and the spiritual view of Jerusalem on the opposite side of Mount Scopus.

The film-story would have to make an opportunity for a sequence in the old city of Jerusalem; it would have to make use of the complex traditions and emotions that were attached to the sights of the Via Dolorosa and of the dark lanes and huddled synagogues of the old city; it would have to show the progressive force and spirit of the new city, too.

And apart from all the physically obligatory scenes, the places that had to be in the picture because of their beauty, or their historic and spiritual connection, there were the mandatory requirements of the life in the country. Something of the cultural life had to be shown, through the city of Tel Aviv—perhaps the theatres or the symphony orchestra. Something of the industrial life of the country had to come into the story, either showing the manufacturing complex in Haifa harbour, or perhaps the diamond industry of Nathanyah, or the potash works of the Dead Sea.

And finally, the pioneering aspects of land reclamation had to come into any story of Palestine, and for this, the new drive toward settling the desert of the Negev was the obvious answer.

Plainly, there were enough 'must' items for the construction of a full-length documentary film. If we could hope to get them all in, we needed a story of movement—a chase, or a search.

Usually, writers feel that the inclusion of obligatory scenes hampers them. But sometimes one feels these scenes as a challenge to invention. And since in this case most of the requirements had originated with myself, there could be no complaint.

In the end they were all solved, through the

story of a boy's search for his family. The central motif of the story echoed in my mind from the story of every survivor I had met in the liberated camps and on the roads of Europe, during and immediately after the war. The first and consuming quest of each was for the remnants of his family. Indeed, I somewhat eaught their obsession, and for many weeks almost dropped my work as a journalist in order to collect lists of survivors, with the names of the kin they hoped to find and spread these lists wherever they might be useful.

One story emerged from the rest. It was the story of a little boy in Buchenwald who refused to leave the camp when liberation came because his father had been at the camp with him and his father, when taken away on a work-party, had told the child 'don't go away from here—wait here for me until I come back. Otherwise we will never find each other'.

This became transmuted into the story of a child whose father, when being taken away with the rest of the family on a deportation train, told the child to run and hide in the woods, 'you will find us in Palestine'.

The child then arrives in Palestine with a group landed illegally by the Hagana; from the first moment he reveals his obsession that he will find his family in Palestine. As the group is taken, by truck, to a settlement in lower Galilee it becomes possible, by following the truck, to disclose such views as Mount Tabor in the pre-dawn and the Sea of Galilee in dawn.

The life of a typical settlement is revealed as the refugees begin to adjust themselves to their new home, and as the children try to befriend the boy, David. But he rebulfs them, and runs away in search of his own family.

David trades an army jack-knife for a ride on an Arab boy's donkey, and through their runaway episode we see more details of the shores of Galilee and the life of the region. The relationship between David and the Arab boy, and between the settlement and the Arab boy's village, serves in a most natural way to illustrate the typical workaday relationships on the ground level, between Arabs and Jews.

The runaway episode is halted when the donkey gives birth to a foal; the boys are brought back home and David is given the foal. But as it cries for its mother, he carries it back, wading across the Jordan which is between the Jewish settlement and the Arab village. Later, it is decided at a meeting of the settlement that David shall be sent to a children's village, where he will be among other boys like himself, with a chance for special care toward adjustment.

This time in the daylight, the truck passes on the Haifa road, through the Emek, past oil refineries; it stops in Haifa, where David learns that a ship of legal immigrants is entering the port; he hopes to find someone from his family on the ship.

After his further disappointment in the port, the story progresses to the children's village; on the

(Continued on page 148)

# THE UNIT WITHIN

Realist Film Unit has been making documentary and instructional films since 1937. During the last two years a Unit under the Educational Supervision of Dorothy Grayson, B.Sc., has completed ten classroom films. This 'unit within' is now preparing, shooting or completing eight films.

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first night he quarrels with the boys who insist he is an orphan like all the rest of them, he has a fight and runs away again.

Through means of this flight, it is possible to show glimpses of Arab shepherd life, and of Caesaria, and finally of the new city of Tel Aviv. Here he is led to seek his family amongst the members of the Palestine Philharmonic orchestra, for one of the violinists bears David's family name, Halevi.

David interrupts a rehearsal, where a new Palestine folk symphony is being performed. But the violinist is not from David's country—Poland. However, someone knows of a Halevi from Poland, working at the Dead Sea potash plant.

Again the boy's journey leads through a section of unforgettable Palestine landscape—this time as he rides a bus down the Jericho road. He passes through the potash works, where Jews and Arabs labour side by side and finds Yehuda Halevi; the worker pretends to be his uncle.

As the boy begins to find himself at home with the Halevis, the life of the community is felt—the Sabbath by the Dead Sea, the visit to the neighbouring settlement, the chatter of Palestinian children about their vast projects for electrifying and irrigating the country.

But when David discovers that Halevi is not really his uncle he runs away for the last time—to find the office in Jerusalem where, he has heard, there is a record of all the families that have been found. On his journey through the wilderness, he is helped by an Arab merchant who takes the boy to Jerusalem on his camel-train. They enter by the Gate of St Stephen. The boy becomes lost in the maze of the old city and is helped by two priests who find him on the Via Dolorosa. They take him to his own people in the Jewish quarter. (Here, we deliberately avoided the Wailing Wall.) The boy enters a synagogue and from there is directed to the new city.

With a troop of children masquerading for Purim, he at last finds the 'office where they have the names'. This Search Bureau for Missing Relatives is actually housed under an ancient ruin, between the new and old cities and the long files of family-records, in the catacombs, provide a perfect background for the climatic moment when David discovers that his family is dead.

In his collapse, he has a reversion to infancy. He is taken to the Haddassah hospital on Mount Scopus and there his friends from the first settlement find him. In his phase of infancy he identi-

fies the refugee woman who has befriended him and the leader of the settlement Hagana as 'mamma' and 'papa'.

This moment fuses the story of the child with the story of the refugee woman and her problem is revealed in the following scene, which takes place on the campus of the Hebrew University, adjacent to the hospital.

The story moves on to the establishment of a new colony in the Negev by the refugees, together with a Palestinian youth group. The child is brought to the settlement.

In ploughing, a stone is turned up bearing an ancient inscription with the name Halevi. Through this incident the boy is brought back to reality, in this symbol he finds his family.

The course of this story provided the inclusion of all the self-imposed obligatory scenes, and yet provided this in such a way that every setting added to the dramatic potential of the tale.

While it was the director's task to realize the scenes in terms of acting, the finding of the precise locations and the enlistment of the people of each place for authentic background usually fell to the writer. Partly, this was due to my working knowledge of Hebrew and partly to my long familiarity with the country and with Jewish customs. For though the film was made with English-speaking participants the work in the entourage was usually conducted in Hebrew.

While all of Palestine was extremely excited by our film project, and more than ready to cooperate, the very intensity of interest sometimes caused difficulties. For the smallest participant wanted to be sure that our point of view was acceptable and every scene was scrupulously investigated. As the population is intelligent and hyper-sensitive this often led to delays and to discussions and explanations which would seem tryingly protracted under ordinary circumstances. In addition to allaying the suspicion of the political groups and of the Arabs, there were difficulties of tradition to overcome.

My script for instance envisaged a scene in a synagogue in the Old City. Now, almost all orthodox Jews consider photography as forbidden under the command not to make graven images. How could one 'realize' such a scene?

I found the leader of the old-city community and got him to show me an ancient, beautiful, little synagogue behind his own house. It was named, he told me, the Ohr Chayim—the Living Light. It so happens that I wrote a book of Chassidic tales some years ago and knew that the Ohr Chayim was one of the great rabbis of that mystical sect.

This communion of information, coming from an unorthodox American Jew, was the opening point. We discussed Chassidism for hours. And finally we were permitted to film our scene in the holiest of Old City synagogues.

In the completed film there are, of course, many things which I feel might have been different, and many things which the director feels might have been different, had there been fewer practical difficulties—such as the curfew, which usually struck as we had finished three hours of preparations and were ready to film. But these are the limitations of the method of shooting in live locations; in return you get the quality of life.

As a writer, I believe the labour I put in for six months, after the six weeks I spent in writing the script, was necessary for the fulfilment of an author's responsible share in the realization of this type of film. The goats are among the rocks—even if I had to carry them there myself.

# CORRESPONDENCE

DEAR SIR.

With reference to your reviewer's comments on my book *British Film Music*, may I correct him on two points of fact? First, I did not say that the GPO Unit became known as Crown Film Unit in 1939: (Page 106... 'Although the name was not altered until some months after the outbreak of World War II, the GPO Unit became in effect the Crown Film Unit a few hours after Premier Neville Chamberlain had announced the fateful news that Britain was at war...')

Secondly, in the case of the film October Man, Kenneth Pakeman wrote three short pieces of music before the film went into production for use in the film; subsequently, the music was not used in the final version and William Alwyn was called in to provide the entire score for the picture.

I have to thank the reviewer for his correction in the case of *Stricken Peninsula*.

JOHN HUNTLEY

FOR

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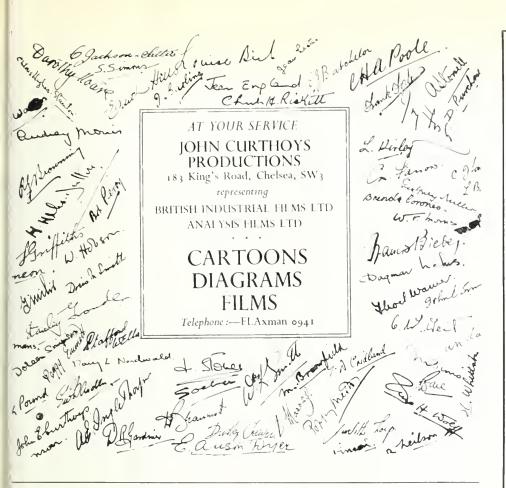
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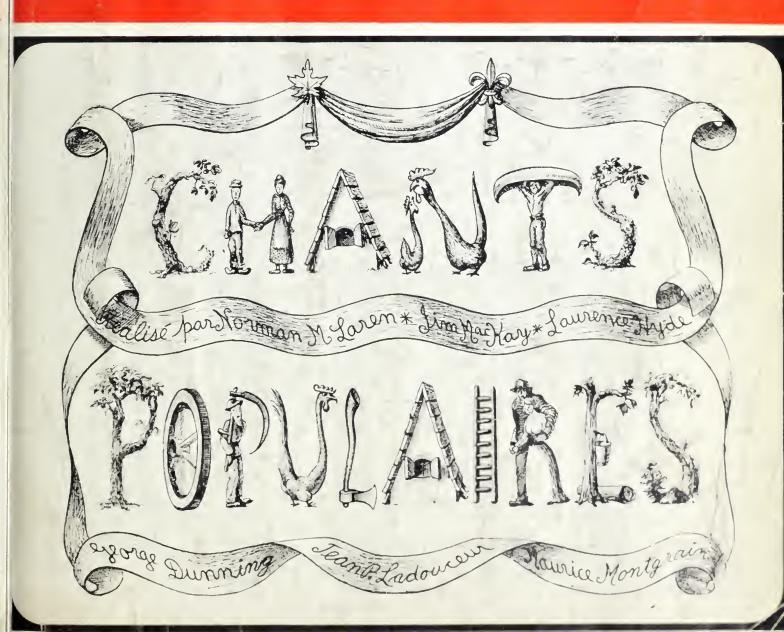
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ONE SHILLING

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The Blackheath Film Unit, who would scarcely claim to be educational specialists, have produced in Sugar from Britain a film that has practically everything for the serious geographer. If there are any to complain that the pace is too pedestrian, the content too factual, they would be of the type that subconsciously expects in the classroom the fireworks and fantasy of the local cinema. For those who believe with me that in education, at least, we should have good wholesome bread with our circuses, Sugar from Britain is the right

sort of food.

'In the first place, the subject, the production of beet-sugar in this country, is of paramount importance. Then the presentation is beyond praise. From first shot to last, from the sowing of the beet seed to the weighing and packing of the sugar, the camera has been carefully placed to impart maximum clarity to the point at issue; and whenever photography is inadequate, diagrams are inserted. The accompanying commentary completes an ensemble of thoroughness and substantiality, explaining a process here, adding a few statistics there. There is enough information to satisfy the most exacting requirements.'

From Look and Listen's review by

W. G. Moore, BSc.

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# QUESTIONS TO THE KRS

AT THE September Council Meeting of the Kinematograph Renters' Society the Film Society movement was condemned as a 'breeding ground for the leaders of anti-film attacks'. It would be interesting to know the exact meaning of the statement, but it's not difficult to understand this sudden feeling of antagonism on the part of the KRS towards the Film Societies.

Since the arrival of the import tax, re-issues have suddenly become important—important to the renters. Up till now, the Film Societies have been big customers of re-issues and, therefore, the KRS feels a cool breeze and develops a stiff neck in that direction.

But has the KRS ever stopped seriously to think about Film Societies and about the films they show? We wonder just what the KRS knows about the matter; maybe it will not be out of order if we give here a short résumé of the development and activities of Film Societies. It might even reach the eyes of the KRS and convince them that they are conceivably looking through the wrong end of the telescope.

The Film Society movement began in England with the formation of the London Film Society in 1925. The aims were 'to show a group of films which are in a degree interesting and which represent work that has been done, or is being done, experimentally in various parts of the world'. Before the war there were 40 Societies in England but during 1939 this number dropped to 23. In 1945 an English and Welsh Federation of Film Societies was set up with the thirty members. There are now about 75 General Societies and 50 Scientific Film Societies, the latter represented by the SFA. A rough membership estimate of both ordinary and scientific groups works out at a total of about 65,000.

The Societies have had to fight their way along. Local authorities with a few exceptions (notably the London County Council) have been unco-operative. Watch Committees have been active in setting themselves up as censors over the films which the Societies wish to show. But never before have the Film Societies also had to stand out against the renters.

It is worth considering the type of programmes planned. In early days, documentary had a big place—it was through these

shows that the early work of the documentary film producers became more widely known. Russian films banned by the censors such as Battleship Potemkin could only be seen by members—this particular film has never had theatrical distribution in England. Modern programmes are heavily overloaded in the direction of French feature films; Danish, Czech, Italian and Russian work is included. Documentaries from all countries are shown as well as the best English features. Naturally Hollywood has a place also in the programme—'Classics' such as the Grapes of Wrath, Of Mice and Men and the Chaplin films appear time and time again.

But, in looking over all available programmes for the last year it would seem that there are very few occasions where any Film Society bills a film which has been a big box-office draw all over the country. On the other hand, many of the films shown to members and receiving the most enthusiastic receptions are ones which either have never had full theatrical distribution or have proved disappointing in terms of box-office receipts.

The average weekly attendance at the cinemas is in the neighbourhood of 20,000,000 at the worst. We have said that Film Society membership is about 65,000. Is it possible that an annual membership of 65,000 can have any effect on a weekly attendance of over 20,000,000? On the other hand, 10 million adults do not go to the cinema at all—it is reasonable to suppose that some of these people are Film Society members. We must also remember that most groups do not hold shows all the year round—the most usual arrangement appears to be fortnightly throughout the winter months. In other words, any effect which Film Society membership might have on attendance at general cinemas is very, very small and, on the whole, the members go to their Society shows to see films which they cannot see at the 'local'.

In other words may we respectfully pose two questions to the KRS on behalf of the Film Societies? These are:

- (a) What is meant by saying that the Film Society movement is a 'breeding ground for leaders of anti-film attacks'?
- (b) Do the renters feel that their interests are being threatened by the existence of Film Societies? If so, how?

# NOTES OF THE MONTH

The Cover Still on this issue is the Title Card from Chants Populaires (No. 5) made by National Film Board of Canada

# International Scientific Film Association

THE CONGRESS held in Paris from October 2nd to the 9th, 1947, arranged jointly by the Institut de Cinématographie Scientifique and the Scientific Film Association, came to a very successful conclusion with a unanimous decision by the delegates to form forthwith The International Scientific Film Association.

A provisional constitution for this new international organization, which will, of course, require subsequent ratification, was agreed by the delegates from 22 different countries.

Under this provisional constitution the International Association will have a main meeting each year, but between these main meetings, the affairs of the Association will be managed by a council comprising five officers and seven other members.

The Association will be concerned with all aspects of scientific film matters. As a start, however, to its work, it was agreed that invitations to join the Association should be sent to those countries who had not been represented at the Congress in Paris. In addition, the exchange of information through the office of the Association (which will be established in Paris at an early date) will forthwith commence on those scientific and technical films that are already available for exchange, on methods of appraisal and on Customs regulations on the exchange of films.

Moreover, following the agreement that concurrently with each annual meeting of the International Association, which will be held in different countries by invitation, there should be held a screening of new scientific and technical films, the British delegation were asked to arrange for the 1948 Congress to held in Great Britain in October, 1948. Arrangements to this end are immediately being put in hand by the Scientific Film Association of Great Britain.

# Conference in Manchester

THE Education Committee of the Scientific Film Association is holding its annual Conference in Manchester (at the University) on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, November 21st/23rd, in conjunction with the Manchester University, the City of Manchester Education Committee and the Manchester Scientific Film Society.

The subject of this year's Conference will be the Visual Unit including films, film strips, wall charts and teachers' handbooks. Two Visual Units will be shown in their entirety, one dealing with water supply and the other with local studies.

H. D. Hughes, MP, Chairman of the Committee for the Preparation and Production of Visual Aids, R. J. Thom, Secretary of the National Committee for Visual Aids in Education, and Mrs Marcouse of the Ministry of Education will speak about what has been done to develop this teaching tool and will discuss plans for the future.

Other speakers will include members of the production teams responsible for the visual units demonstrated.

We hope that the Conference will be well attended. A report of it will be included in our next issue.

#### Un-American

THE MOST un-American aspect of the present Congressional inquiry into un-American activities is the inquiry itself. The investigating committee seems determined to make nonsense of the very constitution of the United States. Set against the garish background of Hollywood, the investigation has recently taken on a nightmarish character. In a courtroom got up like a stage set, defending attorneys find themselves being forcibly ejected amid howls of 'throw that bum out'. Stars, with attendant trains of fans, fall over themselves in the rush to tar and feather the next man. But those who seem so anxious to pin the label of 'red' on to their colleagues are likely to find that they have stuck a far nastier label on themselves. To their credit a number of film people have come out strongly against this fantastic witch hunt. In fact, the committee may find that the glare of Hollywood publicity has shown up its activities in their true light.

# Good twopence worth

concern for the nation's culture is, unfortunately, a rare quality among political organizations. The Communist Party is, therefore, to be congratulated on its timely Memorandum on the Film Industry. An analysis of the present control and tendencies of the medium, and of the 75 per cent tax and the alternatives that have been suggested is followed by practical proposals designed 'not only... to reduce the present dollar tribute, but... to readjust the industry along lines restoring its national independence and ensuring a better service to the community'. Selling at twopence, this document deserves the serious consideration of all who are interested in the national and cultural values of the cinema.

# We've had it too!

FURTHER TO the remark on Mr Rank which was published in a paper in the Russian sector of Berlin and reprinted by us in our last issue, we'd like to point out that Mr Rank's is not the only portion of the British film industry which comes under review. Here is a short extract from a digest of an article in *Soviet Art*. (August 15th.)

'The writer begins by saying that unlike the Soviet documentary cinema, neither the American nor the English documentary cinema has ever been interested in reflecting on the screen the fundamental principles of reality, though both have attained a certain skill in the reproduction of events. The Anglo-American documentary cinema sets itself a quite different task-to stupefy the spectator with lies. For this purpose it produces, for instance, pseudo-ethographical films with the stamp of intentional thoughtlessness upon them, showing a 'colonial paradise', these films aim to falsify reality in the most shameless way, while colonial 'feature' films, novels and essays contain the same ideology. Primitive propaganda films on the lines of film posters are also produced. Finally, there are films of an openly advertising character. No wonder that one of the British film firms engaged in the production of documentary films is subsidized by a gas company!"

'Time for Enquiry' is the title of an article by John Grierson published by the Albyn Press in 'DOCUMENTARY 47'. We give below a few of the main points, but we hope that readers will read the whole article. Comments are welcomed—as an introduction we give:

A good deal of gloom surrounds the British documentary operation in this summer of 1947. I think the situation is urgent and warrants an immediate official enquiry if a great national asset is to be saved from damage, and most important needs of the State in the field of information are to be imaginatively fulfilled. But first let us see the problem in proportion.

The complaint takes various forms. Something—the best ones say—is going out of documentary, and in fact why are they so full and why did we not make such a show at Brussels as we once did with the *Song of Ceylon* and sundry other minor masterworks of the moment? Far too many units, it appears, are going into instructional work in plain avoidance of the difficulty of revealing in dramatic or poetic or other creative form, the stubborn social material of the day.

The films are slack for lack of fire, and so are the boys who make them, runs the criticism. There are shocking stories of people of talent doing nothing for a year and losing their competence. Production procedure lacks the tempo which is essential for creative work and there are endless dying delays as between the film makers, the sponsors and the people of the Treasury. Committee production, I am told, has raised its ugly head to the point where films are killed in the script by bureaucratic indecision.

It is said that the economies and administrations of the units are not always as orderly as they might be, and that many of their efforts could be better co-ordinated. It is doubted in some quarters whether production by thirty to forty units with separate overheads and sometimes insufficient resources can represent an efficient system.

I therefore suggest that the solution does not lie outside the terms of public sponsorship but, on the other hand, lies in deliberately and patiently working to make that sponsorship an imaginative sponsorship. This is where the emphasis should now lie. Criticisms which do not recognize this task, and defections which are merely impatient, do not greatly help.

There is criticism on both sides. The units charge the sponsors, and particularly the Government sponsors, with a lack of decisiveness and a lack of imagination. They say they have lost the conception of a total driving plan for the use of the documentary film in the urgent service of the nation. The sponsors, on the other hand, say that the film makers are too independent by half and cannot be relied on to deliver efficiently or even to deliver what they have undertaken to deliver, and finally that the boys are so full of small politics these days that nary a one of them has time to throw his cap over a steeple.

I agree when people say that, without imaginative support from the sponsors, imaginative films are impossible. I even sympathize a little when people talk of throwing up the Government relationship altogether and re-discovering their freedom. But I still conclude that it is a suicidal attitude and not realistic, either socially or aesthetically.

The situation calls for a new measure of mutual confidence and a new measure of leadership on both sides. As for the documentary people, I would have them count their blessings, even if they find their rations short. Where elsewhere has the documentary idea been so richly maintained even when a good deal of formless stuff which neither taught nor revealed was passed off in its good name? Where elsewhere have so many companies been maintained in such continuity of public work that they have come to expect it, no matter what administrative shapes they gave themselves?

As for the sponsors, they are fortunate at this time to have a

# **EXTRACT**

# FROM GRIERSON

school of film-makers at their disposition who, whatever their foibles have made a profession of this realistic field of cinema and have remained faithful to it. With better organization, they represent an essential asset to Britain at this juncture, because there is much in these days of change which the British public needs to clear its vision and strengthen its will for the job ahead.

Perhaps the documentary people are not at the moment so vigorous in new ideas as they might be, but who, pray, is? The gap created is a spiritual one which is evident everywhere. The documentary people are part of a larger picture, and there is no great difference between the frustrations of the COI and the frustrations of the units who think they are afflicted by it. Neither are yet at the stage of seeing where the positive way of the public will flies, and who can blame them when the leaders themselves flounder in equal uncertainty? I would say that the so-called 'dullness of documentary' is not yet a disaster. Only its defection from the service of reality could be.

In this matter, the documentary people have, of necessity, to look to the brightness of their creative weapons and the methods by which they work. The situation calls for an examination of what they are doing on every level of talent to take the documentary film beyond the level of mere technical proficiency and into the world of imaginative interpretation. They cannot continue to live on the word 'documentary' itself, nor on its successful contribution to educational theory, nor on its reputation of practical achievement in the hard days of the war.

I do not want to push the point too far in a difficult situation, but I do not like the loss of direct and confident relationship between the artist and the Government official; and I am bound to think that if something is going out of documentary, it is because something has gone from its essential underpinnings. Ground has to be made up. A notable understanding of the needs of the nation is the first condition of a positive, fresh and imaginative contribution toward their fulfillment.

The second condition may lie in recognizing the need to reorganize the documentary business, and radically, from an administrative point of view. There was never a time when anyone could say of the documentary people that they took personal advantage from the work they did, or served their own comfort. I have been told a hundred times over that this was silly and that we could never hold a group together on such a basis. But the documentary people did so, and, even when my friend Lejeune speaks dividing words now, this she must allow.

Where Miss Lejeune has something, and where I must at this moment speak out, is in saying that now is not the time for complacency. I do not think the documentary people can afford the independent luxury of so many units. I do not think they can afford the present high cost of films. I do not think they can afford the present laboriousness in which a film is conceived, or the present tempo in which it is made. We cannot afford it for the simple reason that we are shooing our sponsors away.

Short of a proper enquiry, I have myself no conclusions to offer. I simply want the documentary film in Britain to be even better in the public service than it has been before. I want the documentary group to be in the vanguard of the national effort and an example of good sense and discipline in the creation of the future. Above all, I do not want the documentary group to wait around for things to happen to it from the outside, when now, as it has always done, it can write its own brave ticket. It requires, however, a special effort; and I think now, and not later, is the time for it.

The first International Festival of Documentary Films was held at Edinburgh from August 31st to September 7th, concurrently with the three weeks' Festival

Organized by the Edinburgh Film Guild, with the assistance of a widely representative committee and the co-operation of the Central Office of Information the Festival was designed: (1) To present for the first time a world view of documentary achievement by showing examples of the best realistic production from many countries, and (2) To create an opportunity for the reconsideration and re-assessment of the principles and methods of the documentary movement.

The Festival was opened by a ceremony at the Playhouse cinema on the first Sunday afternoon. Speeches of welcome were made before the films by the Rt Hon Sir John I. Falconer, Lord Provost of Edinburgh; John Grierson, Director of Mass Communications UNESCO; and Norman Wilson, Chairman of the Edinburgh Film Guild. Subsequently there was a programme of films at the Playhouse in the evening. During the following week there were twice daily film shows at the Guild Theatre, Film House, a Show at the Central Hall, Tollcross, organized by the Scottish Educational Film Association, and the Festival concluded with an afternoon and evening film show at the Playhouse cinema. In all seventy films from seventeen different countries were shown to an audience totalling over five thousand, a figure which, judging from the numbers turned away daily, would have been very much higher if more accommodation had been available at the Guild Theatre.

# DNL PRESENTS

# EDINBURGH IN REVIEW

Introductory Note

The assessment of foreign films presents a number of problems. Obviously true criticism can only be applied in relationship to the conditions prevailing in the country of origin and the audience for which the film is intended. In the absence of such knowledge, and hampered in many cases by an ignorance of language, it is easy to underestimate the significance or effect of a film for the purpose for which it was designed. Viewed under the conditions of the Festival the impact of any film becomes a very individual matter, and it is clear that there will be frequent differences of opinion due to the varying knowledge of each viewer. A relatively unimportant film about a country or people of which one knows little, may, for example, when seen with a number of others seem more interesting than one in which the background is familiar.

In making this survey of the films shown at the Festival, the attempt has been made to keep these points in mind, but with such a large number of films to cover it has proved impossible to publish full critical reviews of every film. We have therefore been obliged to limit this survey to a short statement of the theme of the film, together with a few comments which may serve as a guide to their value, assessed from the opinions of a number of independent observers. Inevitably such comments must leave much unsaid, particularly as regards British films, many of which will be the subject of longer reviews in our regular columns, but we hope that our readers will be able to get from them some idea of the total picture which the films at the Festival presented.

No exact details of length have been obtainable; the running times given should therefore only be regarded as an indication of whether a film is a onereeler or five. Most of the foreign films shown at the Festival are not obtainable in this country. Viewers interested in any particular film are advised to seek information from the Embassy of the country concerned.

To the team of reviewers who made this survey possible, DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER extends its thanks.

# Playhouse. Sunday. August 31st. Afternoon

Opening ceremony. Films fram Britain, Denmark and the USSR

# 1. Cumberland Story (Britain, 50 mins.)

1. Cumberland Story (Britain. 50 mins.)

Theme. New methods and new machinery can bring renewed life to the coal mines and new hope for the men who work there. The film tells the story of the finding and working of an old seam, lost in a mining disaster a century before.

Camment. Well made and in places exciting. Nationalization, it is implied, will do in all pits what was done in this one; but the characters never really come to life and we are left with our doubts. As a story the film holds attention; as a moral for the mining industry as a whole, it fails to convince, and the ending is flat. Why, if the film is believed, with present good intentions, with nationalization and a five-day-week, is there still so much wrong with the mining industry? There are deeper problems which this story does not tackle or even hint at.

# 2. The Seventh Age (Denmark, 18 mins.)

Theme. Old-age pensioners in Denmark. A survey of the system for the distribution of pensions, and arrangements made by the State to house those without resources of their

Comment. A balanced and satisfying account of its subject, with a commentary in English. Apart from the story it tells of a fine social service, this film is remarkable for its warmth, humanity and simple common sense. The problems of old age are shown with real understanding.

#### 3. The Festival of Youth (USSR. 50 mins.)

Theme. The parade of national representatives of youth from every part of the USSR before the Soviet leaders in the Leningrad Stadium in 1946. Shot in Agfacolour.

Comment. For fifty minutes the eye is dazzled by a whirl of dancing and marching in some of the finest colour yet seen on the screen. But it is too long and marred by a chauvinistic

commentary in English, and too frequent reminders of Stalin. This is a record rather than a documentary film, though the attempt is made to relieve the monotony by glimpses of the countries from which each group comes.

# The Playhouse. Sunday evening

Films fram Paland, Australia, Britain and France

### 1. Native Earth (Australia, 14 mins.)

Theme. Australian colonial administration in New Guinea. The film discusses the exploitation of the natives before the war; shows the part which they played during it, and ends with the attempts now being made to develop them for selfgovernment.

Comment. A frank and fast-moving account, which, though in places faintly self-righteous, makes its points well without

## 2. Student of Breslau (Poland. 11 mins.)

Theme. The rebuilding of university life in war-torn Poland. The students themselves repair their halls and lecture rooms. Everything is short, so alongside their studies even the students must work for their living at ordinary jobs. But life is not all work, and there are lighter moments when the students, like youth everywhere, dance and flirt.

Comment. Direction and camera-work poor. To British eyes the film is dull and unimaginative. An understanding of the commentary would have helped. In Poland the film probably has a considerable propaganda value.

# 3. A String of Beads (Britain. 28 mins.)

Thenie. Love in the tea gardens of Assam. Boy buys beads for his girl in the market. A marriage is arranged and a baby is born. Camment. A simple lyrical story with superb photography and commentary. The film gives no real picture of life in Assam—but it was not intended to; within its own terms of reference, it is a fine piece of filmcraft.

# 4. Farrebique (France. 96 mins.)

Theme. The life of a peasant family through the four seasons of the year on a farm in south-western France. Every detail is followed, births, deaths, the rotation of crops and the perennial question as to wbether the farm shall be rebuilt.

Camment. This is a film of the earth earthy. Everything is real even to the parais dialect—which apparently the French themselves cannot understand. Sensitive, slow as the people themselves, packed with a lyrical symbolism, this film is redolent of a nostalgia for the land. Whether you like it, is a matter of taste. Either you will think it a piece of arty fandango which goes on loo long, or you will think it a

# Guild Theatre. Monday, 2.30 and 8

Films fram Yugaslavia, Australia, France, Britain and the United Nations Organization

# 1. Youth Railway (Yugoslavia. 40 mlns.)

Theme. Many regions of Yugoslavia have been unconnected for centuries by any but the most primitive forms of transport. To bring the railway into Eastern Bosnia after the war. youth brigades from every part of the country are mobilized.
The film shows how these young men and women succeeded in their job with only the simplest tools.

Camment. Wasteful of its natural drama, this film is crude and repetitive, but it impresses by its raw vitality. If the English commentator could have ceased her exhortations for a moment to allow the camera to speak for itself the result might have been a film of major importance. Nevertheless as a record of how something valuable was created, and as a reminder of what can be done by sheer entbusiasm, the film has a lasting effect.

# 2. Indonesia Calling (Aastralia. 20 mins.)

[2]

Theme. When, after the war, the Dutch were trying to reconquer Indonesia and suppress the Republic, the Australian waterfront workers struck to prevent the sailing of ships carrying soldiers and war material. The film tells the story of how this strike, supported by seamen of many eolours and nationalities, halted the Dutch effort at a critical time and gave the Indonesians a breathing space.

Comment. Made under conditions of considerable difficulty, this film has rough edges. As a record of international eo-operation in a common cause, it is stimulating and exciting.

#### 3. The People's Charter (United Nations Organization, 20 mins.)

Theme. An account of the world needs that brought the United Nations Organization into existence. The film tells how the charter was signed, and appeals to ordinary people everywhere to make it work.

Comment. Built up from library material in a March of Time style, the film has a disproportionate significance against the background of present international politics. If its message is laboured too long, the language, at least, is one that is understood in the cinemas.

#### 4. Assassins d'Eau Douce (France. 20 mins.)

Theme. Internecine warfare at the bottom of a pond.

Comment. As a photographic record of the struggle for existence between the minute creatures, who live at the hottom of ponds, this film is a considerable achievement. Horrible to watch, the raucous jazz accompaniment seemed unnecessary.

#### 5. Le Tempestaire (France, 22 mins.)

Theme. A story of Breton life.

Camment. A tedious anecdote, lit occasionally by beautiful shots of the rocky eoast.

#### 6. The Infantryman (Britain, 20 mins.)

The place of the Infantryman in the British army. His duties and his importance to other arms of the force.

Comment. One of a series made for the War Office, the film attempts to cover too much ground. For its intended audience it may have had some value; there was little for a Festival audience.

# 7. Chasing the Blues (Britain. 8 mins.)

Theme. The importance of welfare in the cotton mills. Canment. A lively and amusing film which uses a mixture of cartoon actuality and superimposition to make its points. A pleasant change from objective documentary.

# Guild Theatre, Tuesday, 2.30 and 8

A programme predominantly oboat Scotland. One film from Sweden.

#### 1. Progress Report (Scotland, 10 mins.)

Theme. Rehousing in Glasgow.

Comment. Simple reportage—from the word go the film leaps ahead with facts and figures of temporary and permanent building in district after district. Housing statistics are not usually very memorable; the film does little to make them more so.

# 2. Paddy's Milestone (Scotland. 34 mins.)

Theme. The island of Ailsa Craig, whose rock provides the world's supply of curling stones.

Comment. Beginning in pre-history, the film passes in succession from a study of life on Ailsa Craig to the cutting of its rock for curling stones; thence to the mainland, where they are finished, and ends with a study of the game of eurling. This is interesting material, and some of the sequences are well made, but there is enough here for several films. The facetious and discursive commentary is irritating.

#### 3. Caller Herrin (Scotland. 20 nins.)

Theme, Herring from sea to table, Modern methods for canning, curing and freezing which are providing a sound economie basis for the industry.

Comment. It is difficult today to be original about trawling; wisely this film does not attempt any novel approach. Telling a straightforward stary, it does a competent job, and, in the sequences on the preserving of herring, adds something to one's knowledge.

#### 4. Country Policeman (Scotland, 20 mins.)

Theme. The life of a country policeman in a rural district of

Comment. Apparently the policeman's lot here is a happy one. A pleasant solid film, with a touch here and there of humour, but what opportunities are lost for a real human

#### 5. North-East Corner (Scotland, 20 mins.)

Theme, Life in the north-east corner of Scotland.

Comment. A fine study which moves gracefully from the trawlers on the coast to the mechanized farmers inland, pausing en roate to look in on Aherdeen. A sensitive film which achieves a genuine flavour of the land and its people.

#### 6. The Glen is Ours (Scotland, 30 mins.)

Theme. Local Government. Shall the Glen be preserved for the people or sold for commercial exploitation. decide.

Camment. This is a staged production, which alternately appals by its vulgarity and entertains by a display of genuine comedy. As fact, it is nonsense; as fiction, it is fun—and the message goes over. Whether you like it or hate it, there is no doubt of its value for cinema audiences. The greatest weakness is the improbable acting of some of the characters.

#### 7. Sunshine Over Snow (Sweden, 10 mins.)

Theme. Life in the wilds of Lapland. Owls, mice and hears. Small boy hunting birds is frightened by the bear. He runs home. Father hunts the bear with rifle and dog. Night falls, The bear attacks the dog. Dog and hunter go home leaving the bear lord of the land.

Comment. A brilliant short film, sensitively observed, photographed, and put together. Picture and sound combine to give the magic of a fairy tale to a few tiny incidents in the life of a far distant people. An object lesson to film makers, this was one of the outstanding delights of the Festival.

#### Guild Theatre. Wednesday, 2.30 and 8

Mainly Conadian films, with contributions from Poland, USA, Denmork and Switzerland

- 1. Fiddle-Dee-Dee
- 2. La Poulette Grise
- 3. Cadet Rouselle (Canada, Eoch 7 mins.)

3. Cadet Rouselle (Canada. Eoch 7 mins.)

These three colour productions by Norman McLaren were one of the surprises of the Festival. Fidale-Dee-Dee is an experiment in the abstract; pattern, shapes, line and colour dance across the sereen to the theme of a lively tune, played upon a violin. A film which leaves you dazed, breathless and excited. La Poalette Grise and Cadet Rouselle are cartoons illustrating popular French-Canadian folk songs. Most people are allergic to songs on the screen, but these films open new fields; the quaint drawings are a delight to the eye and fit perfectly to the mood and the words of the songs. They make you sing too!

#### 4. Accidents Don't Happen Nos. 3 and 4 (Canada. 10 mins.) Theme. Safety first in factories. How to avoid accidents by taking common-sense precautions.

Coniment. Using a comedy character who does everything wrong, these films are slick and fast moving. One may wonder whether sarcastic comedy is the hest way of making people think, but at least they are genuinely funny. As such they will be remembered when a dozen films of serious exhortation would be forgotten.

#### 5. Klee Wyck (Canada, 20 mins,)

Theme. The life and work of the Canadian painter Emily

Comment. An interesting but maddening film. Emily Carr is clearly an exciting painter. As an introduction to her work the film has great value; but the commentator oversells the story, and the continual close shots never allow a moment to reflect upon her work as a whole. Made in Kodachrome.

#### 6. A Feeling of Rejection (Conoda, 23 mins.)

Theme. Social maladjustment. The psychoneurotic causes behind the inability to make friends and enjoy social contacts.

Comment. For its theme the film takes the story of a lonely Comment. For its theme the film takes the story of a lonely girl, who develops symptoms of headache and lassitude in consequence of her inability to eope with her social environment. In flashback we see the story of her early life and the way in which her over-anxious mother dominates her natural reactions. Naturally the film over-simplifies the issues, but if films about psychiatry are to be made, this is one which will give food for thought to neurotics and parents alike. Less commentary would have been an advantage; there are some things which the audience should he left to discover for themselves through a purely visual technique. technique.

# 7. Warsaw Suite (Poland. 30 mins.)

Theme. Destruction and rebuilding in Poland.

Comment. For this theme the Poles have chosen to use a pure impressionistic technique. Here is every trick of the early cinema—buildings from every angle, masks and smear filters, reflections in water, figures against the sky, disembodied hands and feet, all against a hackground of the three sections of a symphonic tone poem. For a British audience, trained in a factual approach this symholism is romantic and arty. But there are sections which are genuinely moving, and it has the advantage, for an overseas audience, of relying on a purely visual technique. It is a measure of the skill of its composition that at the end one realizes that it carried not one word of commentary nor needed any.

#### 8. Boundary Lines (USA: 10 min )

Theme The artificial barriers that divide man from man, race from race and people from people

Comment Using a wealth of devices, this colour 'cartaon' is an intelligent and imaginative attempt to iflustrate the point that 'a line is only an idea', it can be what we make it Simply and clearly the film moves from point to point, showing the futility of barriers, building up its argument and its appeal for individual, national and international co-operation to the final consequences of failure—the destruction of mankind itself through the atomic bomb. As a presentation of the personal aspect of the world's racial problems, it is entirely successful. Technically superb, this is a brilliant and stimulating film.

#### 9. People's Haliday (Denmark. 15 mins.)

Theme. The facilities available for Danish workers to enjoy

Comment. This, another in the series of films dealing with the Danish social services, shows the contributory schemes for holiday arrangements on an individual or camp basis, and the attempts being made to get a better mutual understanding between town and country by organizing holidays for townsfolk on farms. Although rather wandering and confused in places by attempting too much, the film sue ceeds in getting over a real picture of the people of Denmark. ceeds in getting over a real picture of the people of Denmark and how they enjoy themselves.

#### 10. Le Souverain (Switzerland, 20 mins.)

Theme. The life of a small community in a Swiss valley.

Comment. This is a straightforward film which, hy choosing Comment. This is a straightforward film which, hy choosing a few scenes from the life of farmer Lichtenberg's family and picturing them vividly, succeeds in giving a rounded picture of the life and spirit of the people in this Swiss valley. The few scenes of a village council settling the question of whether it is in the interest of all for a road to go through the tit is in the interest of all for a road to go through the overbetter than any fireworks or exhortations. And their sports are amusing; was golf after all not a Scottish invention?

# Guild Theatre. Thursday, 2.30 and 8

Films from Britain, India, Austrolia, USA. Switzerland and

#### 1. Here is the Gold Coast (Britain, 40 mins.)

Theme. The economic, agricultural and administrative problems of the Gold Coast and the way in which the Colonial Government is trying ta deal with them.

Camment, This is a comprehensive survey of a little-known colony which holds the attention in spite of its length. The film gives an impression of objective analysis, which is strengthened by the absence of any sense of complacency. and the use of a native-born commentator.

# 2. Bassein (Indio. 10 mins.)

Theme. A day in the life of an Indian fisherman in a Christian-Indian community.

Comment. A simple story attractively photographed

# 3. School in the Mail Box (Australia, 20 mins.)

Theme. The vast distances which separate many Australian families from each other have led to the organization of a children's correspondence school, which teaches them by means of the post and the radio.

Camment. A fascinating story, efficiently but unimaginatively treated.

# 4. The Blue Riband (USA. 20 mins.)

Theme. The 4 H Agricultural Clubs, which give training and advice to young American farmers.

Comment. There is more than a hint here of Hollywood The theme is lost in a pompous story about the insufferable Williams family and their aim to win the Blue Riband prize at the local agricultural show. Everyone is happy and smug in an American paradise—none the less, technically a competent job.

# 5. Lucerne (Switzerland, 15 mins.)

Theme. The attractions of Lucerne and its musical festival

Camment. A travelogue which tells you almost nothing about the musical festival, all that you could want to know about Lucerne and which would almost certainly deter you from visiting it. Adequately photographed but confusingly constructed.

# 6. House in the Desert (Palestine 27 mins )

Theme A story of Jewish co-operative achievement in Palestine How schemes of flooding and irrigation succeeded in converting the desert of the Dead Sea into fertile land

Comment—It is understandable that, in the present situation, the Jews should feel the need to stress their achievements in Palestine. But with such a theme, it is a pity that the treatment is not more restrained, over-dramatization tends to weaken the effect. In spite of this defect, this is an exciting and well made film.

# Guild Theatre, Friday, 2.30 and 8

Films from Austrolia, Denmark, Italy, Czechoslovakia and Britain

#### 1. Men Wanted (Australia, 15 mins.)

Theme. Life in Australia and the opportunities offered for betterment by learning a skilled trade.

Comment. As a film to encourage immigration this film would not seem very successful; well made, but it lacks the fire of conviction, and shows once again the difficulty of using a personal story to illustrate a general theme. This story of a British sailor, who settles in Australia and is persuaded by his girl friend to learn a skilled trade so that they can get married, never comes to life.

#### 2. Health for Denmark (Denmark. 20 mins.)

Theme. The organization of the Danish Sick Club system, and the hospital facilities it provides.

Comment. A human and likeable film, which tells its story in a clear simple fashion. Notable for its touches of humour and sympathetic direction.

# 3. The Church of St George (Czechoslovokia. 20 mins.)

Theme. The Czech national shrine in the Church of St George, Prague.

Comment. A good example of what can be done by lighting and camera work to reproduce the emotional effect of a static architectural subject. This is a film which, in spite of its excellencies, remains dull to an overseas audience, who do not possess the background of traditional interest.

#### 4. Piazza San Marco (Itoly, 15 mins.)

Theme. A study of the art and architecture on the buildings in the Piazza San Marco in Florence.

Comment. In lesser hands this would be just another travelogue. A superb use of camera and lighting succeeds in holding attention, and results in a film which is remembered.

#### 5. The Water Garden (Czechoslovakia, 10 mins.)

Theme. A nature study of pond flowers and the insects which visit them.

Comment. Superb colour gives many of the shots of this study a startling beauty. Unfortunately, designed presumably for children, it is made exasperating for adults by the silly and whimsical English commentary.

### 6. A Modern Guide to Health (Britain. 10 mins.)

Theme. Simple health tips on posture, sensible clothing, exercise and sleep.

Comment. An amusing and entertaining cartoon, which puts its points over well.

# 7. Bambini in Citta (Italy. 15 mins.)

Theme. How the children of Italian cities live and play.

Comment. A brilliant and delightful study. The film has no

Comment. A brilliant and delightful study. The film has no social message to offer, but it succeeds in capturing the spirit of childhood. These urchins watch the sights, play and get up to mischief, not only in the cities of Italy, but in every city of every country in the world.

(This programme was to have included the film Les Quatre Soisons from Belgium. Unfortunately by error the film sent from Belgium was an English one of the same name, sub-titled in French and Flemish.)

On the same evening a showing of films was arranged by the Scottish Educational Film Association at the Central Hall, Tollcross. The programme comprised Air Mail and Documentary of Achievement from South Africa; Accidents Don't Happen and Vegetable Insects from Canoda; Boundary Lines from the USA; and Latitude and Langitude from Britain. Some of these films were included in other programmes and are commented upon above. No comments are available on the others at the time of going to press.

# Guild Theatre. Saturday afternoon

Films from Poland, Switzerland, the USA, Sweden, Denmark ond Britain

# 1. Easter in Lowicz (Poland. 10 mins.)

Theme. Easter customs in the town of Lowicz.

Comment. This is a pleasant, simple film, which succeeds in catching something of the character of the people, and of the mixture of picty, superstition, and plain high spirits that are often found in peasant communities at a time of religious festival.

#### 2. The Balance (Britain, 10 mins,

Theme. Britain's overscas trade. The reason for need to balance imports and exports.

Comment. An excellent short film for its purpose. Actuality and diagram are skilfully blended to give a clear and concise summary of the essential facts.

#### 3. La Varappe (Switzerland, 10 mins.)

Theme, Mountain climbing on Swiss peaks.

Comment. This is an interesting and well made film, which explains the technique of mountaineering. Notable for a skilful use of the camera to heighten the climber's sense of isolation and suspense.

#### 4. High Plain (USA, 15 mins.)

Theme. The life of the primitive people, who live on the high plateaux of Bolivia.

Comment. Factually the life of these people—a mixture of ancient Indian and Spanish—is interesting. But told in a happy travelogue vein, the picture presented is superficial and casual. One cannot believe in the kindness of the benevolent landlord, who, in such a poor and primitive land, exacts no money from his tenants—contenting bimself only with his right to their work for just three days of the

#### 5. Locomotive (Poland. 20 mins.)

Theme. The devastation of the railways and rolling stock in Poland after the war, and the efforts being made to repair them.

Comment. This was the best of the Polish films. Clearly designed both to stimulate railway workers to greater efforts and to inform the public of the reason why they have to put up, temporarily, with such shocking conditions of travel. For this purpose it would appear to be a very good film. Relying to a great extent on fast moving montage, the film achieves a considerable emotional effect, which can even surrount the difficulty of language and background. even surmount the difficulty of language and background.

#### 6. What Will Happen (Sweden, 10 mins.)

Theme. The training facilities available for Swedish youth when they leave school.

Comment. An uninspired survey, which painstakingly examines a great variety of trades. No doubt of some value for its intended audience.

#### 7. Good Mothers (Denmark, 15 mins.)

Theme. The story of the Mother-Help Organization in Denmark, which cares particularly for unmarried mothers.

Comment. A vivid and human film about one of the most ignored problems of our social system. The choice of a single illustrative case leaves us, however, with a feeling of an incomplete picture of the system as a whole. There are questions unanswered upon which we should have liked to know more.

#### Les Voyages de Jadis a Aujourd'hui (Switzerland. 20 mins.)

Theme. The development of the Swiss railways from their early chaotic beginnings to nationalization and electrifica-

Comment. As a story of how a small country succeeded by popular vote in producing an efficient nationalized public service, this film is interesting. The material, however, is not such as to inspire a very high quality of film making.

# 9. Home and School (Britain, 22 mins.)

Theme. A new approach to teaching and parenthood. By learning to understand their children and the why of their actions, parents can get the confidence and companionship of their children, and the teachers will find them more ready to learn.

Comment. To deal with this theme the film tells a story of a small suburban family, who by good fortune have sent their children to a progressive school. The contrast between their behaviour at home and at school leads the parents to discover the key to a happy relationship with them. This is an impressive example of the acted story documentary, which develops its theme clearly and logically. The children are excellent, but are these middle-class people really are excellent, but typical of England

# Guild Theatre. Saturday evening

Films from the USA, Italy, Britain, and Australia

# 1. Round Trip (USA. 10 mins.)

Theme. International trade. Its importance to America.

Comment. The film tries to explain why protective tariffs are Comment. The film tries to explain why protective tariffs are harmful to national interests. In fast moving sequences the film cross-questions and argues with people in different jobs, countries and positions of life. This is an all-out effort; eye and ear are assaulted continuously by every device of sound and camera. In the end, sad to say, the point gcts lost in confusion. A pity, because this film has something important to say and tries hard to say it. Concerned primarily with American problems, it is possible that to an American, steeped in isolationism, the point would be clearer.

# 2. The School (USA. 20 mins.)

Theme. A day in the life of a small-town American school.

Comment. Steeped in sickly sentiment, this film looks as though it were shot by an amateur, who got caught in a school by a rainstorm and had nothing better to do.

#### 3. Pascoli Eterni (Italy. 10 mins.)

Theme. Life among the sheep farmers of northern Italy. Methods of ebeese making from sheep's milk.

Comment. A simple and well-made little film, which gives a real picture of the way these people live.

## 4. Dover Spring, '47 (Britain. 10 mins.)

Theme, Replanning and rehousing in Dover since the war.

Comment. An intelligent attempt to present housing statistics in an entertaining form. Not entirely successful, it is nevertheless a pleasant change from the usual documentary approach to this sort of subject.

# 5. Watch Over Japan (Australia. 10 mins.)

Theme. The Australian occupation of Japan.

Comment. This film does little more than confirm our knowledge of the fact that there are Australian troops in Japan. Of the country and of what is being done by the occupation forces there is no hint. Technically it would appear to have been compiled from news-reels.

#### 6. Learning by Experience (Britain. 34 mins.)

Theme. A study of children's behaviour under different circumstances.

Comment. This is a film designed for teachers in training to provide material for discussion and study. For this purpose it would seem an interesting experiment, which needs a closer study than can be given in a brief space. The children are quire unselfconscious and the commentary is confined to plain statements and questions—the answers are left to the viewer.

#### 7. A Thousand Million a Year (Britain, 10 mins.)

Theme. The work of the Department of Customs and Excise.

Comment. Cut down, for theatrical purposes, from a longer version, this film presents an uninspired and disjointed account of what could have been a fascinating story

#### 8. The Magic Globe-Czechoslovakia (Britain, 15 mins.)

Theme. Aspects of life in Czechoslovakia which will appeal

Comment. This film, made for the Children's Cinema Clubs, is one of a series which attempts to show British children something of the life of people in other countries. For this purpose two children pay a visit to Czechoslovakia by means of a 'magic' film carpet. As one might expect there is nothing here very profound, but the film is well made and in places visually almost exciting. Children will certainly be interested—whether they will be any the wiser about Czechoslovakia is another matter.

# The Playhouse. Sunday afternoon

Films from Sweden, Britain and Denmark

# 1. Rhythm of the City (Sweden. 20 mins.)

Theme. The city and the people of Stockholm.

Comment. This is a film of great beauty. It makes no startling discoveries, it tells no facts. But here, skilfully blended with deep understanding and exquisitely photographed, are a series of small incidents in the life of the people of a great city. This, a film without words, speaks in a language which will be understood by ordinary oeople the world over.

# 2. The World is Rich (Britoin. 45 mins.)

Theme. Over a large part of the earth people are starving; yet the resources of the world could provide for them all if there were proper provision for distribution and storage of surplus, and if up-to-date methods of agriculture were employed in countries still farming by primitive methods. The film appeals for international co-operation to make the World Food Organization, which sets out to solve these problems a success.

Comment. Using the technique of interview, library material Comment. Using the technique of interview, library material and diagram, which was so successful in the earlier World of Plenty, this film builds up its argument with relentless logic and urgency. In the matter of food supplies, one of the world's greatest problems, there is only one choice of this generation to make—international co-operation or hunger followed by crime, disease and war. No criticism of detail can obscure the fact that this is one of the most important films of today. important films of today.

# 3. Your Freedom is at Stake (Denmork. 50 mins.)

Theme. Denmark under the Nazi domination.

Comment. This is not only the story of the Danish Resist-Comment. This is not only the story of the Danish Resistance movement, it is a history of the rise and fall of Hitler and the Nazi Party. As an historic document the film is unique, for this is no reconstruction—it was actually shot during the war under the eyes of the Gestapo. As might be expected from such a compilation, the results are uneven; without an understanding of the Danish commentary, the

(Contd. Col. 1, p. 160)



# Bouquets Department



# THIS IS THE FILM TREATMENT FOR



# PLEASE MAY WE HAVE YOUR COMMENTS QUICKLY— IF POSSIBLE WITHIN

Film productions have to be made to a schedule.

Any delay means idle time for technicians; and idle time means that the technicians lose their enthusiasm, and the Government loses money.

DNL has long thought of organizing a Bouquets Department. What more appropriate time to start than the Xmas issue? Particularly when the Central Office of Information has risen to the occasion with the brand new folder reproduced alongside.

This is not to say that *DNL* will not very hastily organize a Kick-in-the-Pants Department for any future occasion when blame may be more applicable than praise.

When we look at the COI folder we like to think of all the people who will in future receive COI treatments inside its beautifully striped cover.

We like to think of them creeping like snails unwillingly into their offices one cold, raw, austerity winter's morning when a delicious, tasty fog has settled happily down on their Monday breakfast of household milk and inadequately reconstituted egg—we like to think of the new energy which will spring from their chilblained fingers and their frost-bound brains when they find the latest COI treatment lying happily on their desks in all its attractive black, white and yellow splendour.

They will read the pep-talk at the foot of the folder—they will analyse it phrase by phrase as they have been trained to do.

They will learn that 'film productions have to be made to a schedule'; they may wonder 'How?' and 'Why?' and 'What schedule?' and 'By whom?'—but that's neither here nor there.

They will realize that 'any delay means idle time for technicians'; Ideas for the Occupation of the Idle Times of Technicians will flash through their brains—Knitting Woollens for Export out of Camera Tape, Making Celluloid Collars for Film Magnates out of dud Film Stock and many other profitable and time-consuming occupations.

They will ponder on the fact that 'idle time means that the technicians lose their enthusiasm' and may be constrained to consider a Memorandum (or even Memoranda) on Occupational Therapy for the Return of Enthusiasm to Technicians.

And then, with a jolt, they will come to the crux, the *coup d'etat* of the whole matter . . . with horror dawning on their faces and fright suddenly dispelling the remnants of the dried egg and the tasty morning fog, they come to the last, the fatal statement—'the Government loses money'.

Seriously, though, *DNL* welcomes the innovation both as a means of hurrying on matters which tend to stagnate and as a sign that COI can show originality in idea and design. We love the Unemployed Technicians and we like the whole conception. May it prove its worth in results.

# WIDESPREAD INTEREST AND CONFLICTING PRESS REACTIONS FOLLOWED THE REMARKABLE SPEECH MADE BY

# SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS

# at the Annual Luncheon of the

# ASSOCIATION OF SPECIALIZED FILM PRODUCERS

# We print it in full below

THE EARLIEST line of film production in which we as a people made our mark was the short documentary film. British documentaries were widely recognized as being in a class of their own but unfortunately the general public either failed to appreciate this fact or having appreciated it were unable to give due encouragement to the carrying on of the good work.

As a result the specialized film producers and other short film producers have found it difficult to maintain their output.

During the war the position was different because the demands of the Government through the Ministry of Information were large and continuous and managed to keep all the available units pretty fully occupied.

Now that the expenditure upon all Government propaganda has had to be cut down the need has arisen for alternative forms of production for a number of Film Units who cannot any longer expect to work full time on Government contracts. To some extent this can be made good by the private sponsored films which some industrialists are enlightened enough to demand as part of their general advertising programme. I hope, too, that some of the new nationalized industries and services will be using this method of publicity to put across the ideas which they need to communicate both to their own employees and to the public.

All these are most useful functions which the specialized film producers can perform for the country but they will not in themselves, I believe, be sufficient to maintain in stable circumstances the number of units that are capable and willing to do the work.

Sooner or later we must somehow or other give the public an opportunity of seeing the output of these units, an output which I am convinced the ordinary person would enjoy more than many of the second features which now disgrace our screens. As your chairman knows this is a matter upon which I have been very keen for a long time, but it is easier to be keen about it than to devise a means of bringing it about.

Several conditions will have to be observed if we are to accomplish what I would like to see, which is that high quality British shorts should replace a lot of the low quality second features which are at present being shown.

The first is that the producers of the shorts should be quite convinced that what they produce for this purpose must be entertainment and not education. You cannot and should not try to force down the throats of people who have paid to be entertained what you consider is good for them by way of education.

That does not mean debasing the quality of short films—for on the whole the public has good judgment as to quality, much better I believe than some of the exhibitors give them credit for!

It is a curious fact that whether you are dealing with film exhibitors or buyers of consumer goods they all tend to place the taste of the public much lower than it really is and they are often surprised and slightly resentful when they discover that they are wrong. I am not, of course, referring to all exhibitors, but to a widespread tendency amongst exhibitors. I, myself, believe that

the best will always justify itself in the public estimation provided it is not used to deceive the public—as for instance by pretending you are out to entertain them when really your design is to educate them. The first point then is that you must produce genuine entertainment. This does not debar you from the documentary technique—indeed it is that very element which can in itself make the entertainment value especially when it can form a pleasant contrast to the feature technique in a single programme.

Second, a proper place must be found in the programmes for shorts—British or otherwise—of this nature. So long as the second feature is insisted upon and no one will build up a programme on any other basis it is almost impossible to put a short into the programme. Two features and the newsreel fill up the whole programme. My own belief is that a more attractive programme could be made—at least from time to time—by replacing the second feature by two or more really good shorts.

Third, there must be enough of the receipts left over after paying for the first feature to allow a reasonable sum to pay for the shorts. We don't want quickies or bad shorts, nor do we need short films on which extravagant sums have been spent. We do need, however, to recognize that good shorts must cost a certain amount and that they cannot be made unless a reasonable return can be obtained by the producers.

The latter two of these requirements are a matter for the exhibitors primarily and for the renters and I hope very much that one of the large circuits may lead the way in this encouragement of the peculiarly British capacity for making good short films.

I have sought, as you know Mr Chairman, to bring together the circuits and the producers of short films on some such basis as I have sketched out but I fear that so far my aims have not succeeded.

I know that some of you—in fact probably all of you—feel that a great deal could be done towards this end by legislation. I think it is true that something can be done but not, I fear, everything. It is not any easy matter to balance out the interests of the very many competing interests in exhibition, renting and production while at the same time guarding the interest of the public and the economic interests of the nation.

However much I, as an individual, might desire to assist one particular branch of the whole cinema organization I must, as a Minister and as responsible to Parliament, try to give a fair deal to all the conflicting interests. I hope, however, when you see the draft of the new Bill you will not be wholly disappointed with our intention and it will, of course, always be possible for Parliament to amend the Bill when it comes before it.

It may be that some of our present difficulties as to dollar payments will not react too unfavourably upon your organization for we certainly must do all we can to produce in this country as many dollar savers as possible and I shall also hope that some of your productions will find their place amongst our exports to other countries.

I am a very great believer in films for educational and propaanda purposes and though we cannot spend the more or less unmited sums upon them that we did during the war I am certain at under the right conditions and given the right films they are ne most powerful means of spreading essential knowledge that the possess. The visual demonstration of facts in an attractive form I believe, the easiest and most certain way of getting them across the public. The film suffers, however, from one serious disability this rapidly changing world and that is the time that must be coupied between the determination of the need to explain a parcular aspect of our lives to the people and the completion and lowing of a film for that purpose.

Anything that we can do and you can do to shorten that period ould vastly increase the utility of films for mass education

irposes.

Though we have gone a long way in developing short films for us purpose you will not, I am sure, rest upon your oars. There is

a great deal yet that we can do to meet new situations by new methods. This is an ever-developing art which must be strongly influenced by the ever-changing needs of our situation and just as many of you have done a great work in the past to widen and develop the appeal of your work to the public, so I am sure you will all of you continue in that good work. You have always shown yourselves great servants of the public and of the nation more interested in the benefits you can bring to society and in the honesty of your art than in your profits or personal gain.

It is that spirit which has shown itself in your films and has been widely recognized as placing them high in the realm of film production.

May you continue in that same purpose and may the evergrowing recognition of your contribution to the art and life of our nation bring you the security and stability which you rightly seek for your production units.

# PRODUCTION HISTORY OF A COI FILM

reprinted from the August issue of Monthly Review—the official organ of the Films' Division of the Central Office of Information

of interest. It shows the many stages through the every film has to go before the show copy pears on the screen. This history is untypical one thing only: everything goes smoothly te treatment, shooting script and roughcut approved without any drastic alterations definancial arrangements go through thout a hitch. Often, alas, the history of a oduction is not so straightforward as this.

(1) The Ministry of Help writes to Films Divion saying that they urgently require a short film Industrial Exteriosis, for non-theatrical showto factory workers and study groups.

(2) The Chief Production Officer talks to the oduction Controlling Officer handling that inistry and they agree the film will help the blic's morale considerably, if only it can be ade quickly enough. They decide that it sounds to a two-reeler, costing about £4,000, and that seems the sort of film Nadir Films might well ake, if only Hector Bathos is free to direct it.

(3) The Director approves the project.

(4) The PCO starts a production file called adustrial Exteriosis', rings up Hector Bathos d finds that he is free, and arranges a briefing eeting with the Ministry of Help.

(5) The briefing meeting is attended by the O, Bathos, the Public Relations Officer at the inistry of Help, and the experts on Exteriosis. Bey decide that the film must be aimed primily at foremen and charge hands, that it should two reels, with a straight commentary, and at it should present the positive aspects of teriosis in a thoroughly popular style. After the eeting, Bathos and the PCO have a drink gether and exchange ideas.

(6) The PCO writes a minute to the Production ontracts Section, asking for Nadir Films to be mmissioned for a two-reel treatment on dustrial Exteriosis', at a fee of £65. Production ontracts recommend this proposal to Finance vision, who approve it. Production Contracts en send a formal commissioning letter to Nadir

(7) At the instigation of the PCO, the Ministry of Help write a formal request letter to Films Division, asking them to produce a two-reel film on 'Industrial Exteriosis' at a cost not exceeding £4,000. The PCO minutes this to Production Contracts, who minute it to Finance Division, who ask the Treasury for authority to make the film. The Treasury, after some thought, give their authority.

(8) Hector Bathos sends in his treatment. The PCO discusses it with him, and he rewrites the first sequence. The PCO then discusses the treatment with the Chief Production Officer and the director. As a result, Bathos rewrites the first sequence again, so that it's almost exactly as it was in the first place.

(9) The PCO sends copies of the treatment to the Ministry of Help. After a fortnight, a meeting is held at the Ministry to discuss the treatment. After much argument about the true nature of exteriosis, the Ministry approves the treatment, except that the character on page 3 should be a woman and not a man.

(10) The PCO gets Nadir Films commissioned for a shooting-script, in the same way as they were commissioned for a treatment. At the same time he has a quiet word with Bathos about that first sequence, which he's still not happy about,

(11) Nadir Films send in the shooting-script. This again is discussed by the PCO the Chief Production Officer and the Director, and approved with some small alterations.

(12) Nadir Films send in a budget for the production, totalling £3,950. The PCO discusses it with the Production Contracts. Production Contracts have a word with the Business Manager of Nadir, crosses off two weeks' salaries for editing and recommends the contract to Finance Division at £3,895. Finance Division authorize the budget, and Production Contracts send out an official contract letter to Nadir Films.

(13) Nadir go ahead and shoot the film. When they've got it to rough-cut stage, they bring it up to the COI and show it to the PCO, with Bathos reading the commentary. The PCO asks for two shots to be interchanged, and insists on cutting out the phrase 'breaking bottlenecks' in the commentary. Then the rough-cut is shown to the Director, the Chief Production Officer and the Technical Production Officer. As a result of their comments, the whole of the first sequence is cut out and replaced by a single close-up of exteriosis in action. Finally, the rough-cut is shown to the Ministry of Help, who like it very much indeed. At this last meeting it is decided that the final title for the film shall be 'A Stitch in Time'.

(14) Nadir record the commentary, complete the film and deliver the show copy to Films Division. The Technical Production Officer sees the show copy, to check the quality of recording and printing, and gives it his OK.

(15) As the film is for non-theatrical showing in factories, Home Non-Theatrical Distribution estimate how many 35 mm. and 16 mm. prints will be needed and order them from the laboratory. At the same time, they forewarn the Regional Film Officers that they will be getting the film very soon now.

(16) The prints arrive. Some are placed in the Central Film Library, some are sent straight out to the Regional Film Officers.

(17) The Regional Film Officer for the North-North-East includes the film in his next factory show. The projectionist reports that the film went down extremely well, especially the funny bit at the end.

There the story ends for the moment. But the film will go on being shown non-theatrically, to different audiences, for a year or more Scientific Film Societies with their own projectors will borrow copies from the Central Film Library (unfortunately the film is not suitable for schools). And the Technical Production Officer will have it dubbed into a dozen foreign languages, and the Overseas. Distribution Sections will help to arrange for the film to be shown in every country which, like ours, has a big exteriosis problem.

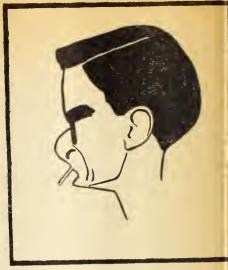
# JEAK—A DOCUMENTARY CLOSE-UP OF A. E. JEAKINS

The Story by Frank Sainsbury

WHEN I first knew Jeak, in 1935, documentary was very far from being the moneyed business that it is today. In the evenings the boys used to repair to Patmacs in Soho Street, one of the series of repulsive pubs that we seem to have a fatal knack for discovering. And as the directors, with their untold wealth of £8 and even £10 a week, crowded to the bar and expansively bought rounds of draught Bass at  $4\frac{1}{2}d$ , a time and Whiskies (Black and White of course) at 8d. (or was it 9d.) we 35s, a week assistants hung respectfully in the background until we found out if we were in the round too. If unlucky, we would pair off and buy each other halves of mild. In this way Jeak and I often found ourselves buying each other a drink which was a little surprising, as Jeak was a full-fledged camera-man and camera-men were entitled to buy full rounds on their £7 a week if not quite so often as the directors with their private means. But as it turned out, Jeak hadn't got a regular job, he just did an odd day's work here and there at 30s. or so a day, for the GPO or newly-formed Strand or the Travel Association, when they needed an extra camera on the job or their own cameraman was not available or the shooting was a bit tricky and likely to be beyond him. If he got

10 days' work a month I suppose he was lucky. I don't know how long he had been carrying on like that before 1935, several (he'd knocked around with the newsreels before) years, anyway, and finally when John Taylor did give him a permanent job at Realist about 1939 at first he was on a retainer and paid fully only for shooting days. It wasn't till 1940, I think, that he went on a full weekly wage, and could at last relax of 10 years of scraping a day's work here and a day's work there. The reason I mention all this is that a man who will go through all that difficulty and discomfort just to work a film camera must have his heart pretty well engaged in photography. And that is a sufficiently rare thing among camera-men.

At first sight Jeak looks a typical pipe-sucker. He stands on the edge of the company firmly grasping his pipe, listening attentively to the philosophy and witticisms of the company and saying never a word. When, every five minutes or so, he is appealed to or volunteers his contribution to the discussion he sucks his pipe judicially, pauses, and delivers not (thank heaven) the profound platitude you expect from pipe-suckers but nine times out of ten a wisecrack and usually a very good one. Of all the camera-men I've



The Drawing by M. A.

worked with I've always found Jeak in spite (or perhaps to a rattlebag like myself because his long silences the best possible company the job and off. On location I always had feeling that Jeak would have liked his little bit comfort, the good hotel and a five-course me if he had his choice and no one can be stubbor than Jeak once he digs his toes in. But i helped the job for us to stop in an unemploy mill-girl's cottage or a town that was be raided every night or in boozing trawlerme company, then Jeak would cheerfully acquie and make a very good best of it. In fact I've ne known him unreasonable at any time or in way. If he thought a set-up needed four 2and a couple of arcs, and all we had (and it all we usually had) was four 500s and a photo-floods, then Jeak would set to and m the best of it. And never a told-you-so if stuff was not so hot. Considering how demands Jeak has ever made it may be a surprising that the quality of photography he turned out year after year on features or inst; tionals, is the very best there is in documen or indeed on the level with the best in the Bri film business.

Jeak's secret perhaps is that he learned use his lean years of unemployment and p employment. Sitting around at Realist day day with no work to do he never seemed b or at a loss. Usually he had a light mete process of conversion to his own requirement the photo-cell covered with criss-cross bit adhesive tape. Or he'd be ploughing his through all the British and foreign tech journals for ATC abstracts or his own sati tion. Or sometimes, like the yokel-he'd jus The result was that when you did go out shoo with Jeak he was the quickest, best, easies get-on-with camera-man I've ever worked The arty boys make a lot of fuss about full cussion between director and camera-man the exact purpose of the film and artistic me of the shot and no doubt where most car men are not interested in their trade or a only to be directors that sort of thing is necessary. But with Jeak the barest word o and he's got the idea perfectly. It may be unusual in the film business, he can and does Or it may be that, as the merry company ba away, there's a lot going on in a quiet behind those pebble glasses.

# PHOTOMICROGRAPHY LTD

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J. V. DURDEN in charge of production

Whitehall, Wraysbury

# NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

rly Diagnosis of Acute Anterior Poliomyelitis. ucleus with Simpl, for COI and Min of ealth. Technical Advisers: R. MacKeith, E. owlett Kellaher. Medical Director: Brian anford. Camera: Derek Stewart.

eprinted by kind permission of the 'Lancet')

NTION of action proposed by a Ministry, parularly where this involves Treasury authority, ings to mind a picture of long delays, punctud by interdepartmental memoranda. The inistry of Health is to be congratulated on ving abjured such routine in making its film t doctors on poliomyelitis. This film was conved only on the sixth of August; the idea was ered to the Ministry on the seventh; and on eleventh the Treasury agreed to meet its cost. ie Ministry of Health referred to the Central fice of Information, which handles film-making r Government departments, and a unit was mmissioned to undertake the work. On the elfth a final conference was held at the Ministry d the shooting script was decided; and that ne day filming started. Three days later this is completed; and, from the end of August, the n is obtainable in all parts of the country, with ojector and projectionist, from the regional ices of the Central Office of Information, for owing to medical audiences.

The film, entitled Early Diagnosis of Acute sterior Polionivelitis, was made with the help Dr W. H. Kellaher, invoked as a consultant the Ministry, and of Dr R. C. MacKeith, who ted as adviser to the unit, which is directed by Brian Stanford, With a running-time of about teen minutes, it opens with a graphic demonation of the recent age-incidence of cases in ondon hospitals. After brief mention of the ual presenting symptoms (headache, fever, miting) it goes on to portray the common early ins: cranial-nerve palsies are beautifully illusited, as also are the methods of eliciting spasm the muscles of neck, back and limbs; a word spared, too, for early changes in tendon rexes. Then comes a demonstration of lumbarincture technique, followed by brief observaons on methods of disposal of faeces, precauons by the attendant, isolation of doubtful

ses, and methods of spread; finally practitioners

e adjured to notify cases, and when in doubt to

nsult the MOH. Though the film is intended for the general actitioner there are no shots calculated to help m specifically in his encounter with the disease the home—apart from one showing a houseife protecting her food from flies, and another ortraying a doubtful case comfortably isolated a garden. The practitioner would welcome me suggestion of the time-sequence, which ould lend itself to visual presentation. Perhaps, o, he would like an explanation of how the tendant precautionary steps, illustrated in the m by masked and gowned nurses and doctors, to be applied in the home; and especially he ants to know what advice to give the families established or unproven cases. As a rule he ill not be undertaking lumbar puncture. If the

agnosis is in doubt (and it is on this score that

e film advises the procedure) he is likely to fer the patient to hospital. Always, except

occasionally deep in the country, lumbar puncture should be undertaken in hospital, where the risk of infection can be minimized: this is made clear in the spoken commentary which accompanies the film.

Minor Electrical Repairs

The Electric Iron

The Generation of Electricity

The Transmission of Electricity

Merton Park for BEDA. Producers: F. A. Hoare and Winifred Holmes. Directors: Graham Murray and Neil Brown. Cameras: Charles Marlborough and H. Hall. Scripts: Neil Brown. Animation: T. R. Thumwood. Distribution: BEDA. 10 min. each.

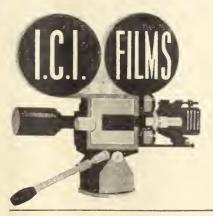
Minor Electrical Repairs shows how replacing a fuse and repairing a broken flex can be simply done and gives reasons for the procedures. The Electric Iron is divided into two parts: how the iron works and how to use it, and includes a very clear explanation of the thermostatic control. The Generation of Electricity relates the movement of a magnet in a coil to generators and power stations, while the Transmission of Electricity carries on the story, describing how a

transformer works and how current is distributed over the country by the grid.

In each film the solid teaching is well done by the animation. What is not so happy is the way the pill has been sugared. It looks as if the producers could not make up their minds whether to go all out for a full film technique or whether to confine themselves to a simple informational method. The idea of the family coping with the broken wire is itself quite good, but it is clumsily related to the ghost voice giving its explanations and exhortations; in fact, as treated, it is appallingly smug and irritating. Part One of the electric iron, on the other hand, is a straightforward instructional film which achieves its purpose, but Part Two is rather the salesman demonstrating his latest model.

The films will certainly be welcome in schools: their best points are that they deal with one subject at a time and that they avoid, albeit somewhat clumsily, the sledgehammer blows of verbal logic. They constitute an interesting experiment at a time when experiments are badly needed, and thus make a valuable contribution to the still small supply of films made directly for the classroom.

A VISUAL AIDS EXPERT



# PRODUCTION FOR RELEASE DURING 1947

FOR SCHOOLS

PENICILLIN (Three Short Films) AMMONIA LIME SALT

OXYGEN

(16 mm, Kodachroma)

INDUSTRIAL TRAINING

THE PAINTING OF BUILDINGS THE TECHNIQUE OF SPRAY PAINTING

SHOT-FIRING IN COAL-MINES

(16 mm, Kodachrome)

FOR VETERINARY AND AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION PHENOTHIAZINE PAYS A DIVIDEND

(Parasitic Worms in Farm Animals)

(16 mm Kodachrome)

FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION

Six subjects in 16 mm. Kodachrome

\* Release dates will be announced

IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES NOBEL HOUSE - LONDON, S.W.I



(Contd. from p. 154)

action in many places is confused and obscure. Taken as a whole, for overseas audiences, the film lasts too long; but there is fascinating material here for a shortened version which, omitting the background, would deal only with the Danish people under the Occupation and the sabotage work of the Underground movement.

#### The Playhouse. Sunday evening

Films from Britain, France and Italy

1. Antarctic Whale Hunt (Britain. 18 mins.)

Theme. The work of the whaling fleet in the Antarctic.

Comment. This film, one of 'This Modern Age' series, has some fine action shooting of the harpooning of whales and of their processing in factory ships to provide important sources of food and other materials urgently needed today.

#### 2. Henri Matisse (France, 40 mins.)

Theme. The life and work of the French painter, Matisse.

Comment. Films about art are nearly always unsatisfactory. This one comes as close to an explanation of the work of a painter as it would seem possible to do. Covering the whole development of Matisse's work, and including some shots of the artist himself, the most interesting sequences are those which show how he builds up his ideas from the initial conception to the final result, and are a record posterity may value. The most irritating part of the film is the atmosphere of reverence and adoration created by the commentary.

#### 3. Paisa (Italy. 120 mins.)

Theme. Episodes showing the interaction between the Italian people and the Allied armies during the invasion of Italy.

Comment. This film, a multi-lingual full-length feature documentary provided a magnificent finale to the Festival. Directed by Rossellini, whose Rome, Open City has already been seen in this country, the film consists of a series of short stories with no continuity link other than that of the Allied armies' advance from the South to the North. Each of these incidents, with its cunningly contrived twist, is constructed with a vivid realism, which is as brilliant as it is terrifying. With only a handful of material, Rossellini compresses into the space of two hours a range of human emotion which makes Paisa an unforgettable experience, and one of the screen's greatest achievements. Paisa is too important a film to be discussed briefly. A fuller review must await its hoped for theatrical showing.

# CORRESPONDENCE

DEAR SIR,

Your October issue included amongst its contents an article bearing the title 'The Miller's Aim'. It was written by an enemy of our country. Yes, an enemy; for in my eyes, like millions of Englishmen, the Bosch will remain an enemy. Let us not forget that period of horror and misery, 1939—1944.

This Bosch is complaining not only of the German film industry, but seemingly about ours also. I request him, as far as our industry is concerned, to keep his nose well and truly out; it has nothing whatsoever to do with him. Many people, I am sure, will join with me in this request.

Complete monopoly, like nationalization, is something to keep well clear of. Take away competition in any business, and you destroy that very vital thing, ambition. Destroy ambition and you destroy life, for every man jack of us lives on ambition. In this country today, we are producing films far surpassing the products of Hollywood: films made by the J. Arthur Rank Organization. Very different from the 'quickies' of 1932—1939, before Mr Rank took such an active interest. Today our industry is respected in many countries. In fact, even Englishmen are beginning to respect us, and that is really something. That being the case, I think the term 'Monopolist Miller' used by our German friend, ridiculous and most certainly insulting. If Arthur Rank has proposed the plan suggested to the British Control Commission, and if it will promote a new democracy in Germany, then I say 'Thank heaven', for democracy is a fine thing.

May I also remind the German writer that we won the war, defeated Germany. Had the boot been on the other foot, I am certain no English man would have been given the opportunity to complain about anything. Nobody could complain as a prisoner in one of the Nazi 'horror camps. Could the citizens of London and Coventry complain as they saw their dear and loved ones crushed to death during the blitz' Crushed to death by Germans. Let us not forget

You have my full permission to publish th above if you so desire. In fact I would esteem it favour if you do.

Yours faithfully,

ERIC LESLIE (ERIC T. ASBURY),

Managing Directo

Leslie Laurence Productions Ltd. 29 Whitcomb Street, London, WC2 October 23rd, 1947

# AN APOLOGY

The article 'Denmark and Film' in our last issue was Mr Elton's introduction to *Documental* in *Denmark*, a catalogue of films shortly to issued by Statens Filmcentral, 1 Dahlerupsgad Copenhagen, we apologize to the publishers at the Danish Government for any inconvenien or misunderstanding caused by its pre-publication in *DNL*.

# THE UNIT WITHIN

Realist Film Unit has been making documentary and instructional films since 1937. During the last two years a Unit under the Educational Supervision of Dorothy Grayson, B.Sc., has completed ten classroom films. This 'unit within' is now preparing, shooting or completing eight films.

# REALIST FILM UNIT

Member of the Federation of Documentary Film Units

9 GREAT CHAPEL STREET WI

Telephone Gerrard 1958

# DOCUMENTARY 47

will be a lasting souvenir of the

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**ORRESPONDENCE** 

from RALPH KEENE

# THE DEATH OF MAJOR DOCUMENTARIES?

c: I wonder if technicians in the documentary of shorts side of the industry fully realize what ll be the effect of the application of the new ature rates to 'films over 3,000 ft in length inaded for theatrical distribution'? So far as I are see it will mean the death of the major docuentary. I do not think that any Government industrial sponsor will be able to meet the
cormously increased production costs; nor will be possible at these rates to make good quality,
5 reel 'featurettes' on a commercial basis.

This company recently had to budget a 4-reel, eatrical-release film for COI. It was overseas oduction and the new feature rates added 2,300 to the wages bill alone (the cameraman ould have been drawing £53 a week!). The sult, of course, was that the film was cancelled a 4-reeler. Yet this production only called for location unit of four people, plus the normal liting staff. Goodness knows what the increased ists would be on a production requiring elecicians, sound crew, sync., camera, etc. And ages aren't the only factor involved. BFPA onditions, I understand, call for a minimum unit fourteen people for silent location shooting! is madness to suppose that documentary can and such rates and conditions.

Unfortunately, the wording of the relevant ause (4a) in the shorts agreement is somewhat nbiguous. It says 'When employees are reaired to work on any film of over 3,000 feet tended for normal commercial distribution rough a renting company, they shall receive as minimum the salaries and work under condions laid down in the agreement between the ritish Film Producers Association and the ssociation of Cine-Technicians'. ASFP mainin that 'BFPA agreement' here means the one at was in operation at the date of the signing f the shorts agreement (May 22nd, 1946). They ly, not without reason, that ASFP would not ave signed a blank cheque for all future BFPA greements, in the negotiating of which they ave no voice. ACT on the other hand, mainin that the new feature rates and conditions utomatically apply as from the date of the gning of the new BFPA agreement. So, for the resent, there is deadlock. As far as I know, no najor documentaries are being made, and Films Division have said that none will be commisoned at the new rates.

Now is this a good thing for documentary?... for its public?... or for its technicians? ersonally I think it is disastrous, for the following reasons:

(1) Major documentaries like Target for onight, World of Plenty, Today and Tomorrow, he Way We Live, are a vitally important part of ur national and social film propaganda programmes. They make a far greater impression a audiences than the average 1-2 recler, and ave done invaluable service in raising the presge and public appreciation of documentary.

(2) Their disappearance would leave the market wide open for the cheap, irresponsible 4-reel quickie, which we should we doing our best to keep off the screen.

(3) From the technician's point of view it is the major documentary which gives him the chance to express himself on a bigger canvas, and thereby enlarge the scope and power of a film's message. And if, as I predict, the application of the new feature rates means the end of major documentaries, then all our technicians will be permanently on shorts rates—without any hope of the increases they have enjoyed from time to time in the past when making this type of film at the old feature rates.

Much of the confusion arises from the fact that, under the present Quota Act, all films over 3,000 ft. in length are classed together in the same category. But, in their costs, their length, their earning capacity, their purpose and the conditions of their production, the 4-5 reel documentary is an entirely different proposition from the commercial, second-feature—or 'B' class—entertainment picture.

As one way out of this unhappy impasse it

should be possible to create a new category of film to include the theatrical documentary and the better type of 'featurette'. It is not practical to legislate on a basis of 'quality', 'purpose' or 'merit'; but it might be possible to arrive at a definition on 'costs' and 'length'—e.g. all films over 3,000, but under 6,000 ft. in length, and costing not more than £25,000, to be classed as 'intermediaries', and made at the old feature rates.

I would like to urge technicians in our branch of the industry to give themselves furiously to think, if they do not want to be condemned, for the future, to making nothing bigger or better than 2-reelers. One last word. . . . If a situation is allowed to develop under which no major documentaries can be made, it is inevitable that many of our senior technicians, feeling themselves frustrated, will move into feature production.

And would that be a good thing for documentary?

Yours faithfully,

RALPH KEENE MANAGING DIRECTOR
GREENPARK PRODUCTIONS LTD

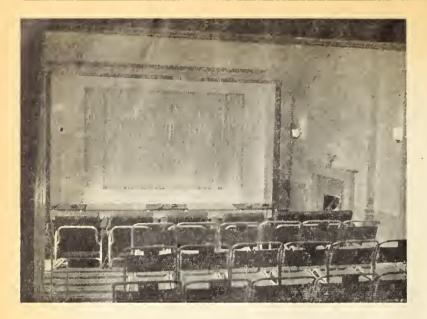
# SEVEN LEAGUE FILM UNIT

We wish our friends a Merry Xmas and a Prosperous New Year

1948

Seven League Film Unit Limited 26 D'Arblay Street London W 1

MEMBER OF THE FEDERATION OF DOCUMENTARY FILM UNITS



This photograph shows the interior of the theatre at GUILD HOUSE, EDINBURGH where many of the Festival shows were held

# NORMAN WILSON

has written for us this account of the growth of the

# EDINBURGH FILM GUILD

WHATEVER measure of success the Edinburgh Film Guild has achieved is not due to any privileged position or unusual wealth. This suggestion of peculiar advantages enjoyed by Edinburgh rather hurts our Scots pride. The facts are, the Film Guild was founded some eighteen years ago when 'intelligent' filmgoing was not so popular as it now is. We were among the pioneers and we virtually had to create an audience. We lectured, argued, preached, bullied. It was hard

work, sometimes dispiritingly hard work in the early days.

We were young in those days and naturally poor. But we took risks and bravely put on films like Caligari and Rein que les Heures, in the hope that we'd scrape together enough members to pay the costs. We even ran bazaars to help the funds! Somehow or other we got through the first difficult years without going bankrupt—and without making any concession to popular appeal.

Our programmes were often 'difficult'. The included all the work of the avant garde, the eat Russians and a strong infusion of documentary in the days when it was a heady and exotic bre

In addition to our shows, we brought up t film-makers themselves to talk about what th were aiming at. Grierson, Wright, Cavalcar will tell you they had a better platform and better Press in Edinburgh than they had London.

We started film shows for children and on they were established handed them over to to Scottish Educational Film Association. Validished the original set-up of the British Fi Institute and initiated the moves which led to to setting up of the Scottish Film Council.

From the beginning, we believed that tobject of a film society was not merely to provifunusual' films for the snobs who regard ordinary filmgoing as a form of intellect slumming. We actually *liked* the cinema, chesulgar and shoddy as it was; we also realized potentialities as a medium of expression and powers as a social influence. Instead of sittialoof in a private and precious world of avagarde art, we felt that our job was in the cinemand among the people.

We therefore organized support for whate worth-while films the trade had to offer. You played up the directors and producers we mattered. We made friends with the renters at the exhibitors.

How hard we worked!

We helped to establish the first British Fedetion of Film Societies and when that was failure we formed the Federation of Scott Film Societies, which has now operated succefully for over ten years. We sponsored the mation of the Edinburgh Scientific Film Societion on probably the largest in the country. We have to a special shows for Government Deparents, for the City Corporation and for variother organizations whose use of films thought it worth while to encourage.

We have helped in many and devious ways stimulate the production of films in Scotland we have helped and encouraged everyone whas come to Scotland to make films. We arran the first Exhibition of Film Decor, held in august precincts of the National Gallery Scotland. And lastly we organized, with the

# FIFTY

# NATIONS

are represented among the members of the British Film Institute who share a belief in the future of the film. For full information, please write to:

# The British Film Institute

An independent organization financed through H.M. Privy Council

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# DANISH FILMS

mark Grows Up. Production: Nordisk Films npagni. Direction: Hagen Hasselbach, Astrid ming-Jensen, Soren Melson. Photography: ne Jensen, Annelise Reenberg, etc. Music:

olth for Denmark. Production: Palladium. ection: Torben Svendsen. Script: Arthur on. Photography: Erik Olsen. Music: Paul ierbeck.

Seventh Age. Production: Palladium. Direc-Torben Svendsen. Script: Carl Dreyer. tography: Karl Andersson. Music: Emil

so long have we in Britain been isolated n any real contact with the rest of Europe, the extent to which the documentary moveit has progressed in other countries in the t few years has hardly yet been realized. ports from travellers abroad and an occaal film have given some indication of what is pening, but, with the exception of Czechovakia—a cross section of whose films were at the Czech Festival earlier this yeariculties in obtaining foreign films have effecly prevented any serious or detailed study of umentary developments overseas.

ud, from previous page

in advisory committee which included Paul tha representing FDFU and Basil Wright n ASFP, the first International Festival of

cumentary Film.

f this reads like a boasting account of achieveats, it is not written with that intention. There othing we have done that couldn't have been ne elsewhere by dint of hard work and a tinuity of effort. The Edinburgh Film Guild low the largest film society in the country. It 2,300 members and by the careful managent of its finances-provided entirely by the mbers' subscriptions—it has built up over the rs a fund from which it has been possible to chase its own premises which contain offices, ary, meeting rooms and a charming little atre, with both 35 mm and 16 mm projectors. ened this year, it is hoped that Film House I become a real film centre from which the ivities of the Guild will continue to expand 1 increase. It is the work that has been done it matters but it is difficult to be completely personal and no reference to the Edinburgh m Guild would be complete without some ention of the officials who run it. There is no ade of honorary office-bearers whose names ght add dubious lustre to the Council. All its ambers have been elected because they have a auine, almost a passionate interest in films ople like Forsyth Hardy, known to everyone documentary as a sound critic and able negotiat-Alan Harper of Campbell Harper Films, ril Ramsay Jones of the Central Office of formation; Rhona Inch Morrison, a wellown architect, who was once with the GPO lm Unit; and Frank MacLauchlan, who as on Treasurer has performed wonders with the uild's finances. The fact that most of these ficials have worked together for many years s meant a constancy and continuity of policy tich has insured both stability and progress.

In the case of Denmark, although since the war there has been an increasing contact between film makers of the two countries, to most people the importance, or even the existence, of the documentary movement there is virtually unknown. These three films-the first examples of Danish work with an English commentary to reach this country—are therefore of exceptional interest.

Planned as part of a series dealing with the Danish Social Services, the films cover respectively the fields of Child Welfare, the Hospital Services, and the Care of the Aged. These are fields in which Denmark has every right to be proud of her achievements, and the films have obviously been designed with an eye to overseas distribution. It would be misleading, however, to imply that they are propagandist in outlook. Indeed one of the outstanding features of these films is the restraint and moderation with which the story is told. In places the commentary is frankly critical, and there is no attempt to impress the viewer with glittering accounts of the best-some of the most attractive institutions are, for example, immediately classified as not typical—and in each of the films inadequacies and dissatisfactions are pointed out. This quality of self criticism conveys an impression of honest analysis which carries a real conviction.

Of the three films the best undoubtedly is The Seventh Age. It tells first of the way in which old age pensions—adjusted to circumstances of environment and resources—are distributed. In Denmark there is no long trek for the aged to a Post Office. The money is delivered; in country districts by the postman; in towns by special messenger. For those who have no homes of their own, various arrangements are made to provide accommodation, either in flats at a rental they can afford, or in institutions. The film concludes with a picture of life for the aged in a number of different types of institution.

For those in this country who know something of the inadequacies of our own provision for the aged, this film will be a revelation. But it is not only for its description of a social system that this film will be remembered. No words can adequately describe the way in which Torben Svendsen, the director, has translated Carl Dreyer's fine script to the screen. The problems of old age are brought vividly to our minds through the eyes of the old people themselves; here by sheer film craft is caught the beauty and tragedy of old age. By turns serene or troubled, pathetic or gay, this film has a deep understanding of human nature. It is a film every detail of which remains in the memory.

(Contd. top page 164)

# THE WORLD IS RICH

GENEVA, AUGUST 27th, 1947

WORLD IS RICH SEEN TODAY BY DELEGATES AND REPRESEN-TATIVES OF FORTY-EIGHT NATIONS AND EIGHTEEN INTER-NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. HIGHLY ENTHUSIASTIC RECEP-TION. F.A.O. IS DEEPLY GRATEFUL TO UNITED KINGDOM FOR THIS SUPERB CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL UNDER-SIR JOHN BOYD ORR. STANDING.

Inquiries to the Central Office of Information

length 5 reels

# A CITY SPEAKS

a Film of Local Government set in the City of Manchester

Inquiries to the Manchester Corporation

length 7 reels

SHORT FILMS

LUE GEULUE . LUE BYTYUGE GDDUARL HOMER OIL HELLS DAA

Inquiries to the Central Office of Information

ZHIBZHYBE

MULEH MOBEL

for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution

for the British Waterworks Association

Producers: PAUL ROTHA, J. B. HOLMES, JOHN WALES, DUNCAN ROSS FILMS OF FACT LTD 25 CATHERINE STREET, WC2 (Continued from previous page)

Health for Denmark shows the organization of the Sick Club system, which through a contributory scheme enables its members to get free medical advice and, where necessary, hospital facilities. For the point of view of the patient the film introduces us to a typical Danish family, while the details of organization are seen through the eyes of the tradespeople, who, as directors of the sick club, are responsible for the management and running of the hospital and its allied services.

In exposition this film is less satisfactory than the previous one. The simple story is inadequate to convey more than a superficial impression of the system as a whole, while the devices used to explain the lay-out of the hospital are clumsy and tend to slow up the action. But for its defects the film has compensating qualities. There are sly touches of wit and humour, which give the film a sense of reality all to rare in our native production. What British director in a hospital, for example, would introduce us to the kitchens, the bedpan and the laundry among the panoply of wards, X-ray rooms and operating theatres? And there will be few of us who do not recognize something of themselves in that incorrigible 'youngest'!

Denmark Grows Up, covering the social services available for babies and young children, ranges from the training of midwives, ante natal, maternity and post natal care in rural areas to the organization of nursery and junior schools in the towns. Children the world over are a joy to watch and the directors make the most of their opportunities, but with such a wide field to cover continuity is difficult. The result is a disjointed story in which the details remain less clearly in the mind than with others of the series. For overseas audiences at least, some restriction of scope would have been an advantage; nevertheless the total picture of social achievement which the film presents is impressive. As in the other two the quality of sincerity is striking, and the film again demonstrates the astonishing ability of Danish directors to bring their characters to life.

For all who are concerned with social welfare, these films will provide a valuable introduction to Danish methods of dealing with their problems. Clearly Denmark has done much in her care for the helpless and needy which we in this country should do well to study. But for film makers, too, there is much of a technical interest. Some of the more serious minded will no doubt be irritated by a joy in film craft which in places is almost naïve, but few will deny that these films have wit, humanity and a refreshing quality of enthusiasm which is sadly lacking in so many of our own films. And finally, whatever to British eyes may be the defects of construction and exposition the fact remains that these are films about real people. The postman, the cigar merchant, the taxi driver, his wife and family, the farm worker sitting by his wife in labour, the old lady who was a trapeze artist in her heyday—these, and many others too numerous to mentionthese are old friends. We meet and know them. These films bring us close to the people of Denmark themselves, to their hopes, their fears and their problems, which are not very different from our own. This, when hatred and misunderstanding are again dividing the people of the world, and when economic restrictions are forcing us back to our island isolation, is important.

Copies of the films may be obtained for private showings by application to the Danish Embassy.

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# **DOCUMENTARY**

NEWS LETTER

wishes its readers

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Good New Dear

# MOST HUMAN BEINGS LIKE APPRECIATION . . .

That it has been said of NORTH EAST CORNER 'its beauty is irresistible', that FENLANDS has been described as 'a lovely and informative picture', that CYPRUS IS AN ISLAND has been called 'a perfect film of its kind', pleases us no less than the warm reception given to A STRING OF BEADS at the Edinburgh Film Festival.

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INCORPORATING DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

JANUARY 1948

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There is considerable alarm and despondency in the documentary world. Jittery sponsors, centralization of all Government film production in Crown, are rumoured to be bringing about the end of documentary as we have known it.

We believe that much of this is unreal. Crises are nothing new in our industry. Pub-talk often magnifies them into disasters. But good and worthwhile documentary films will continue to be made, and we at DATA are determined to be among those who make them.

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# CATS OUT OF BAGS

O. When is a crisis not a crisis?

A. When it's a rank crisis.

Several months ago a tax was introduced which is likely to reduce enormously the showing in Britain of American films and it was assumed that British production would be greatly increased to fill the gap.

At the time of writing one member in five of the Association of Cine-technicians is unemployed and Mr Rank is being heavily criticized by the financial pundits for a productiondistribution deal alleged to resemble a pig sold in a poke. Meanwhile our exhibitors are grovelling about on their wellworn knees praying alternately to the Board of Trade and to the American industry for some guarantee that they shall not be asked to bear, in the shape of a reduction of receipts, any part of the British post-war economic burden.

To cap everything, the Rank Organization and Sir Alexander Korda claim that their established and leisurely production policies are sacrosanct and that chaos would follow any

attempt to interfere with them.

Fortunately and most properly the Board of Trade is not deceived. Mr Harold Wilson has announced the formation of the National Joint Films Production Council 'to keep under review by the Industry and the Government the measures being taken to promote the fullest and best use of available film production resources'.

It is vital that the present spate of recriminations should be brought to an end at the earliest possible moment. An analysis of the situation appears to us to reveal the following key points.

- (1) The tax on foreign films represents the greatest incentive the British film production industry has ever had.
- (2) It may also represent a temporary threat to the revenue of exhibitors.
- (3) The stability of the Rank Empire depends primarily on Rank as exhibitor and only secondarily on Rank as producer.
- (4) Rank has made the fundamental mistake of allowing his interests as an exhibitor to remain dependent on a continuing supply of American films.
- (5) As a result of this mistake and his policy of making a few lavish prestige films instead of more medium cost pictures which would both satisfy the exhibitors' needs and recover their costs with the home market, most British producers have been eaught bending.
- (6) The tax is therefore turning out to provide less of an incentive than was expected. In the circumstances, the appearance of the White Paper on the new Films Act may be handy, but it hardly touches the seat of the present crisis.
- (7) The Government has still to decide between (a) withdrawing the tax and thereby virtually handing back control of the British industry, together with a substantial annual tribute of dollars, to the Americans or (b) taking an active part in the rationalization in the national interest of the British industry.

# NOTES OF THE MONTH

# Happy New Year

WITH 1948 DNL gives place to DFN—Documentary News Letter, reaching a wider readership and being a firmly established magazine, becomes Documentary Film News. Clothing coupons may be scarce but we've managed a new dress and we hope you like it! It was designed for us by James Boswell, now Art Editor of Lilliput. Some of our original readers may remember the time when we came out monthly; wartime difficulties made publication irregular but, with the New Year and a new volume we turn over a new leaf and announce monthly appearance in the future. A word to old subscribers—we need new readers and plenty of them; you'll find a form inside this issue—do please help us by getting it filled in by a new subscriber; or how about giving a present of a subscription to a friend overseas? Don't forget we go post free anywhere in the world. To all our readers—the Correspondence pages have not been over-full lately. Let's have your views and criticism on anything and everything in short letters, we are getting tired of the sound of our own voices!

# The New Bill

THE BILL containing the proposals for the new Cinematograph Films Act, which is to take the place of the 1938 Act, comes to hand just as we are going to press. There is, therefore, no opportunity to do more than provide a brief summary of its main proposals, and to attempt a somewhat hasty assessment of their significance. The most important proposal from the point of view of the documentary and shorts business is that, at long last, and after many years of unremitting campaigning, a genuine cost clause is to be applied. The figure is 10 shillings per foot (labour costs), applying to all films, both long and short, if they are to qualify for exhibitor's quota. While many of the documentary and shorts people would have liked a higher minimum, the figure proposed may nevertheless be regarded as satisfactory, since it will eliminate the quickie which has been the bugbear of the industry for so long. Moreover, the new Bill also abolishes the separate quotas for short and long films, and substitutes in their place separate quotas for first features and for all other films in the programme, with the exception of newsreels, etc., which remain exempt, as previously. The distinction between the first feature and the rest of the programme, as far as quota is concerned, is that the former will be calculated "on the number of days of exhibition of a particular film" and the latter on footage. Renter's quota is abolished altogether. The regulations on exhibitor's quota are, on the other hand, considerably tightened; particularly welcome is the clause which lays down that 'Any British Film' (that is, long or short) 'must be shown at least once between 5 p.m. and 10 p.m. if it is to be counted for quota purposes'. This removes any possibility of the revival of the once popular practice of bumping off British product by showing it only in the mornings. A further clause penalizes the big circuits, and concedes to the small exhibitor; the small man whose theatre takings are less than £100 per week is 'relieved of all quota obligations', but groups of more than 200 theatres controlled by the same person (as it might be Mr J. A. Rank) will be designated as 'special quota theatres' and will be liable to higher quota rates. More than this, the Board of Trade will have discretion not to license any further theatres to the big circuits, a clause which recalls the famous gentlemen's agreement between Rank and Dalton some years back. Going further still, the Bill proposes that the big circuits shall also be compelled to show up to six British films a year certified as suitable by a Selection Board appointed by the Board of Trade; this presumably will be the body set up by Cripps. whose functions hitherto have been highly obscure. The result of this proposal should be that films which the Trade is reluctant to handle because of their unusual or experimental character will be given a chance to prove their worth (or otherwise) in at least some of the major theatres of the country. A rather sinister clause lays

it down that the provisions of the Bill may be applied to 16 mm films; but this is, fortunately qualified by the statement that this can only be done 'subject to affirmative resolutions of both Houses of Parliament'. One of the most gratifying provisions of the Bill refers to the Films Council. Ever since its formation, and subsequent transformations, there have been many justified complaints that it did not adequately represent the balance of power as between the financial, creative, technical and consumer interests of the Trade. Its new composition puts this right; there are to be five independent representatives of the public (of whom one must be Chairman), four representatives of the producers, four of labour, four of exhibitors and a modest two for the renters. The general impression from a hasty reading of the Bill is that the role of the Council is also to be considerably strengthened vis à vis Board of Trade policies and action. A particularly important point from the documentary point of view is that the definition of what constitutes a British film for the purposes of quota has been extended to include films 'made by or on behalf of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, or by or on behalf of the Government of any other part of His Majesty's Dominions'. This removes the anomalous situation by which many productions, including some of the best Canadian films, were ruled out as ineligible for quota. The actual quota percentages are not yet stated in the bill; which is hardly surprising in view of the situation regarding the Import Tax. But the Board of Trade is to be committed to fixing these percentages not later than July 1st, 1948. We shall comment in greater detail on the new proposals in our next issue, when there will also be an opportunity to study the reactions of the various sectional interests of the Trade.

#### The Scientific Film Association

THE SFA has been very busy this last few months—one conference on *The Use of Films in Universities* was held in London (in conjunction with the Cambridge Films Council and the BFI) while only a week later there was one on *The Visual Unit in Education* held in Manchester. Both of them were very well attended and an impression of the latter is included elsewhere in this issue. The SFA is doing a most valuable work in the education field in support of the national committees.

# Films in the Colonies

on January 16th the British Film Institute is to hold a conference on the Use of Film in the Colonies at the Royal Empire Society Hall. Creech Jones (Colonial Secretary) is to open the conference and Adrian Crowley (Under Secretary of State for the Colonies) will be in the chair. John Grierson is expected to speak in his capacity as Director of Mass Media for UNESCO.

# Sequence

A MAGAZINE by this name is being published by the Oxford University Film Society. Number Two has just come our way and been thoroughly enjoyed by the Board. The standard of writing is high and the production is excellent. The good quality paper and interesting stills alone make it worth two shillings a go.

# Film Today

PUBLISHED by the Saturn Press with an Editorial Board comprising Sydney Box, John Cross, Paul Rotha, Carol Reid and Richard Winnington, the first number of a new film publication 'Film Today' (5s.) has just appeared. Lavishly illustrated, it attempts in the words of the editorial 'to cover all those departments of the cinema with which we believe our audience to be concerned'. Subjects range from Unesco to cleavage, the making of a film to poster publicity and overseas film activities

# Films in Germany by ARTHUR ELTON

Film Adviser to Information Services Control of Germany

(A broadcast talk delivered over the British Forces Network of Germany on October 21st, 1947)

THE FILM Section of ISC, or Information Services Control to give it its full name, deals mainly with two kinds of film—those imported from other countries, in our case generally from Britain, and those made by the German film industry for use in Germany, and presently I hope, for export. I am going to consider the import of films into Germany first, not because this is necessarily the most important job being done, but because the Film Section of ISC has just brought this part of its work to a conclusion. Since October 3rd the import and distribution of films from Britain and America has been handed over to commercial interests. From now on they must undertake the very great responsibility of selecting films for Germany. For films are no ordinary commodities. They are the products of creative imagination. Many films, perhaps most films, are pretty poor and shabby works of art, but this does not mean that they do not influence the ways of thinking and feeling of millions of people. For the masses of people of the world learn about themselves and their neighbours through films, learn to despise or admire other countries, learn to buy their goods and judge their ways of life. The world looks at America and Britain through the eyes of Hollywood and Denham. That is one of the reasons why no controlling authority in Germany dare allow films to be used irresponsibly, for they can be instruments of good or harm.

The very power of films is sometimes a bit of an embarrassment to the people who make a living by producing or selling them. For a long time the film industry worked by a formula which ran something like this: the public is always right; therefore the films the greatest number of people pay to see are the best films. QED. On this piece of phoney opportunist idealism, the film moguls in the past justified drenching all mankind in emotional film slush. Then Goebbels got busy. Stealing an idea here, corrupting an argument there, he mobilized the power of the cinema, not only for profit or the satisfaction of shoddy sentiment, but to poison the mind of a whole people. And the film boys outside Germany who for years had been pretending that all they were doing was to 'sell' entertainment-something, they said, as innocent as putting on pantomimes—were suddenly seen to be babies playing with spiritual atom bombs. For the awful truth is that a film may make money because it endorses standards of behaviour or presents ideas which people would be ashamed to adopt if they hadn't 'seen them on the pictures'. And which of us today won't pay a few pennies to have our lower natures not only catered for but positively congratulated? The question which faces us all is -Can the film trade find itself new standards in keeping with the age we live in? And nowhere in the world today is the problem more urgent than

To illustrate my argument, let me quote one of the greatest box-office hits in Germany—the British film *The Wicked Lady*, put out a year or so ago. I fancy so many German people paid to see it because, by implication, they could argue from it that we won the war because many of us are naturally sadistic, sexy, unscrupulous swashbucklers, and not because we had the courage of our convictions. Were the millions of reichmarks that film earned really worth the harm it did? This is the sort of question which must not only be asked but answered by those handling films in Germany today.

Now let me consider the other kind of lilm the films made by the German film industry. Now that Film Section has handed over the distribution of British films in Germany. believe that it will find itself faced with by far the most important task of its existence—the encouragement of a new lively and independent German industry. For films—no matter how base the motives behind their production—are one of the ways a nation expresses itself and takes stock of itself. For the masses of the people film-makers occupy the place the ballad-singers and storytellers used to occupy. Though films from abroad can amuse and instruct, can teach and encourage I think no country can acquire a philosophy ready-made from another; each country must hammer out its own. The film can play a huge part in this process. That is why I believe it is even more important to encourage an independent home industry in Germany than to ensure the import of appropriate films from outside.

If my arguments are right, the new German films are likely both to illustrate trends in German thought and feelings today, and to be a powerful factor in shaping the Germany of the future. If they can find the growing points in the new Germany and bring them alive on the screen, they will do a powerful service for the new Germany. If they merely suggest that the German people are creatures of circumstance, then they will not help the German people to find their way out of their present difficulties. If they counsel suicide and despair, they may do harm.

Let us have a look at some of the German films made since the occupation. Let's take first of all Helmuth Käutner's In Jenen Tagen (In Those Days), by far the best film yet made and released in the British zone. Technically the lilm is of the highest order. It is imaginative; simple effects, like the reflection of trees in the windscreen of a car, have been used brilliantly; the acting is vivid and sincere, and I shall long remember the old baroness being driven out of burning Berlin in a battered car, or the sergeant being shot as he is driving a German officer along a snowy road in mid-winter. The hero of the film, by the way, is a motor-car which tells its own story to prove that, throughout the Nazi regime and the war, there were decent ordinary people in Germany, True enough, of course, but the film lacks something all the same. It lacks a kind of toughness. For its characters, Fascism was a horrible background. None of them participated None of them fought back. No. I'm afraid In Jenen Tagen falls finally into the class of films showing the German people as orphans of the storm. Then there are Zug Vögel (Birds of Passage) from the British zone and Eie im Schatten (Marriage in the Shadows) from the Russian. Both are finely made, but both suggest, or at least imply, that the only way out of difficulty is

suicide. Both, 1 contend, are dangerous. On the other hand, Morder sind unter Uns (Murderers are Among Us) from the Russian zone avoids these dangers, and is besides a masterly piece of film-making worthy to be ranked beside any film made in Europe this year. It is the story of the successful struggle against despair and disillusionment by a prisoner from the Eastern front, who regains his pride by returning to his job of being a doctor. On the way he hands a Black Marketeer ex-Nazi thug over to the police instead of taking the law into his own hands and shooting him. But if you ask me which will be the better box-office success in Germany, I shall reply the former. Not because it is the better film, but because people will pay more readily to see something that implies that non-participation is innocence, than to see something which does not evade the realities of the present situation. A vivid example of the dangers of taking the boxoffice point of view when determining a film policy for Germany.

Alongside the feature lilms there is, of course, the equally important question of documentary films and the huge audiences outside the public cinemas. It is in this field that perhaps the greatest opportunities lie in Germany today. For of all films that suffered under the hand of Goebbels, documentary and teaching films suffered worst. At the present time mixed German and English teams are making documentaries for the public cinemas, and even more importantly, every help possible is being given to the production and distribution of films on 16 mm. In the British Zone there is an organization called Gesellschaft Unterichts for Film und Bild, with its headquarters in Hamburg. This is now at work making a series of films ranging from scientific studies of the honey-bee to plain teaching films for the schools. Other films are planned for adults and children, and presently it is hoped that every German school and adult institute will be able to look to the film both for recreation, learning and culture. A lively and instructive documentary tradition is an asset in any country, and I think that Germany with her splendid technical skill, will presently become one of the foremost countries in this respect.

Finally, of course, there is the newsreel—Welt im Film—which is still a directly controlled Anglo-US operation, though carried out almost entirely by German staff. Welt im Film goes to every cinema in the British and American Zones, and is one of the most important sources of news from home and overseas available in the country today. Presently, I hope, Welt in Film will become a wholly German undertaking.

Well there you have it Germany has slender technical resources, but splendid technicians; she has a film tradition second to none in the world. Our job is to see that the films in the new Germany become an independent, healthy and flourishing movement, representative of all that is best in the German people themselves, and not merely an instrument in the hands of those whose principal aim is to get as rich as possible as quickly as possible, and then get out.

# Venezuela to Verdoux

# A RAMBLE by EDGAR ANSTEY

'YOU'VE BEEN to New York and South America,' said the editor, 'how about an article?' It was true that much could be reported from across the Atlantic. Documentary is ubiquitous in opportunity if not in accomplishment. The world—as every new applicant for a new job will tell you—teems with subjects.

Yet what finally enabled me to embark on this article with some show of enthusiasm was a shorter and simpler expedition than the trans-Atlantic crossing. It was a trip down Charing Cross Road to Chaplin's Monsieur Verdoux. And if, as a result, I write not a word about foreign parts, I suspect that Chaplin's latest film has more to say to documentary film-makers than the jungles of the New World, whether they be of chromium or coconut palm.

Note first that Monsieur Verdoux is a film arousing passionate controversy. Whether or not the wit, the sentiment and the slapstick is accepted without an increase in blood pressure, you may be sure that the moral speculations of the film's climax will lead to disputations as bitter as those which have traditionally been reserved for a Cocteau premier. And the reasons are not dissimilar. For here is someone trying to use the cinema for a personal statement on matters in which we all regard ourselves as expert. Moreover he is clearly possessed by a truly passionate desire to state his case; the whole purpose and manner of the film is subordinated to the need to make a sharp criticism of society. The violence of the audience reactions is the measure of his success.

It is important that Chaplin's climax, in which he suggests that the individual who murders to defend the economic position of his family, may be no more guilty than the nation that goes to war in defence of its way of life, gets an immediate response from working-class audiences. They are pleased also by the direct assaults upon 'respectability' and upon the complacencies of religious jargon. It may not be fanciful to suggest that Chaplin is attempting something not dissimilar from the aim of Shaw's earlier plays (Mrs Warren's Profession, Arms and the Man, for example), but with the important difference that Chaplin appears to reach immediate and direct contact with a working-class audience. Perhaps we should regard Chaplin as embarking in this film on a new career as 'The Poor Man's Shaw' or Shaw without the long words. Some of the vicious middle-class and intellectually snobbish reactions to the Chaplin climax would seem very familiar to GBS. It is true that when he speculates verbally and clumsily on the nature of evil, Chaplin is merely inept, but more than compensating is the beautifully appropriate stylization of his miming (compare not unprofitably Jean Louis Barrault) which goes often deeper than cinema words have yet learned to probe. Watch also his masterly contempt for his backcloth and the way he deliberately uses the screen clichés of train-wheels, feet runing upstairs and the Eiffel Tower to accentuate his satire on the feverish daily whirl of the business-man. He rightly assumes that it is Chaplin and what Chaplin has to say that is the attraction, that the sets and the continuity devices are props to be ignored or themselves satirized.

But what has all this to do with documentary? Let us turn for an answer to the current production schedule of the Central Office of Information. Let us read the titles. Here are documentaries which undoubtedly employ, and often with great efficiency, the whole gamut of cinematic devices known to man. They embrace everything under the sun from the bottling-of pickles to a coloured cartoon about satellite towns. They stand or fall, not by stars or stories, but by their ideas. Why then do the titles make curiously gloomy reading—even for the devotee of documentary.

Is it because of an inescapable conviction that these films—unlike *Monsieur Verdoux*—will have nothing new to say, nothing that anyone has passionately wanted to get across to an audience and for which the medium is a means and not an end?

Have British documentaries become dull because in spite of the crying need for them to revise and restate the social democratic philosophy their makers succeed in saying nothing which has not already been said only too often in print or over the radio—or indeed in earlier films? The number of feature productions which have anything original to say is, of course, also negligible. But they are able to maintain audience interest by their fictional content. They have a tale to tell, normally a familiar one revamped, but at any rate a tale.

Do we reach the conclusion that the documentary film-maker who is eschewing fiction must substitute personal opinion and controversy? I believe that at any rate we should reexamine the role of the individual in the production process. The world is coming slowly to accept the view that although the provision of food, clothing and shelter must be subject to mass disciplines these may well be dangerous instruments on the level of philosophical interpretation and belief. It is already clear that anti-individualist doctrines will not give us full and flexible power over any art-form. Let us not forget that in the earliest days of documentary the element of 'interpretation' was held to be essential and new interpretations do not spring from bureaucracy.

To approach the current documentary problem from this point of view reveals clearly the danger of administration becoming senior partner to production in the control of documentary policy. For official films the Department must name the informational task: the film-maker must be left free to provide the screen solution.

Recently I viewed a group of Continental documentaries most of which put our own work to shame for liveliness of purpose and treatment. Yet in the middle of one of them—a beautiful Italian film of shepherd life and a powerful piece of Italian public relations—a civil servant at my elbow in a stage whisper to her neighbour remarked, 'Not a very clean farm, is it?' Visions were immediately conjured up of the fate of this film had it passed through British official hands. One can readily imagine the deletion of all the key sequences on the grounds that the agricultural methods shown were not of the most modern order.

So we do not need to visit the tropics for a salutary piece of advice on documentary. Let us make a pilgrimage instead to the feet of the courageous Mr Chaplin who had something to say and was not turned from his purpose until he had said it. Let us not forget that in the early days of documentary film-making in this country, something not dissimilar was wont to happen. In these days it is more common to sit back and complain that no one offers any good subjects to make. No one ever did.

# DFN COMPETITION No. 1

It is the year 1588 after the defeat of the Armada. Great social, political and economic changes are taking place in Elizabethan England. The Films Division of the Queen's Privy Council has been ordered to make a series of six films to introduce these changes to the public and to bolster up the morale of the people after the war with Spain. One film each is allotted to the War Office, the Admiralty, the Board of Trade and the Ministries of Health, Agriculture and Education.

We offer prizes of a guinea and half a guinea for the best selection of titles (with suggested Elizabethan script writers) for these six films.

Entries must reach the Editor before February 1st and results will appear in the March issue.

# **BRITISH DOCUMENTARY**

We welcome *British Documentary* which has just been established as a body representative of all those engaged in documentary film production and distribution in this country.

The broad aims of British Documentary are to develop:

- (I) The technical and artistic quality, and the social and cultural value of documentary films.
- (2) The freedom of expression and the moral and artistic responsibility of documentary film workers.
- (3) Proper financial conditions for the production and distribution of documentary films.
- (4) Adequate distribution for every subject which is produced.
- (5) International co-operation, by exchange of

films, workers, and ideas, and by joint productions, through the World Union of Documentary.

It is, in fact, as a result of a series of open meetings held to discuss the World Union of Documentary, set up in Brussels last June, that the new organization has come into being.

A number of immediate and practical functions for *British Documentary* have been agreed. They range from acting as the platform for documentary opinion and policy to providing a central meeting place and club-room.

Membership of *British Documentary* is open to all those working in documentary film production and distribution; there is also a category of associate membership for those who have done service to the documentary movement.

# **★STAR DOCUMENTARY**

# The World is Rich

made by Films of Fact produced by Paul Rotha

WHY is a film reviewer like a Commissioner for Inland Revenue? Because they both spend a lot of time making allowances, and because the same glow of satisfaction warms the hearts of both collector and critic when they find that no allowances need be made. The World is Rich asks no quarter and no charity. Here, for once, there is no necessity to assume excuses, lack of technical means, inexperience, sponsorial spinelessness or lack of funds. Mr Rotha was probably faced with most of these difficulties at one time or another in the course of production: but he has overcome them, and overcome them so completely that not a rack of them is left to mar his finished film. It can be judged as the major work it is, by the most exacting standards of criticism.

The theme is the world food situation, how it arose, and what the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations plans to do -and asks the constituent nations to do-to increase the production of staple foods and ensure an equitable distribution of them to the undernourished millions of the world. It is a measure of Mr Rotha's skill of presentation that he manages to get a subject of this magnitude into a film of five reels without apparent overcrowding, without resorting to windy generalizations, and without allowing his audience for a moment to forget the hungry eyes and aching bellies that lie behind the official figures. Its success in this last respect is perhaps the film's greatest achievement. The power of the cinema to translate facts and figures into flesh and blood-and all too visible bone—has seldom been fully exploited; but it has never been more fully exploited than in The World is Rich. Equally remarkable, in these days when to be candid about ugly facts in an official film is hardly less ill-bred than sniggering at the duchess's toupet, is the uncompromising



'plenty of food everywhere, old man'

way in which this film faces the full implications, ideserves to be, it will help bring agreement of the issues which it raises. Responsibly, reason-considerably nearer. ably, with the help of such prominent personalities as Sir John Orr and the late Mr La Guardia, the case is made for the abandonment of the present economic system in so far as it affects the production and distribution of food. It is not an impartial film. It favours the defenceless, hungry, ordinary man, and is strongly opposed to all those who are permitted by a system of free enterprise to gamble with, speculate in, corner and restrict the food he needs. Controversial? Yes, but the controversy is one in which we are all involved as surely as we are involved in mankind. As Sir John Orr says in the film, if the nations cannot agree about such a fundamental subject as the abolition of hunger and want, there's nothing on God's earth they will agree about. And if The World is Rich is shown as widely as it

The film is not only impressive because of its subject matter. Again and again one is struck by the skill and meticulous care with which shots from innumerable sources have been collected and compiled. The commentary and the music, too, are on the whole admirably composed to bring out the full implications of the visuals. Yet there is something about the structure of the film which is untidy and confused. The broad thread of the argument, although never broken, is sometimes entangled in a knot of irrelevances, and sometimes doubles back on itself so that considerable concentration is required to follow it. This lack of clarity in development is not entirely due to the complexity of the subject, and has the unfortunate effect of making the audience work harder for its information than it should properly be asked to in a public cinema. The criticism might be hardly worth mentioning were it not for the fact that the Isotype diagrams on which the film relies for illustration of some of its principal points are quite inadequate to the task. They have been made without ingenuity and without much thought; and their effect is to complicate still further the already rather tortuous unfolding of the theme.

In spite of these defects, The World is Rich is a documentary film in the very highest class. In courage, sincerity, and importance of subjectmatter it is in a different category from the ordinary run of propaganda and public relations productions, and it merits the widest possible exhibition throughout the world. Yet it is understood at the time of going to press that it will only get a very meagre theatrical distribution in this country. Whether this is due to the opposition of the renters or to some other cause, it is greatly to be deplored. A change is long overdue in a distribution system which permits second features of the most disreputable kind to exclude from the screen films of real public interest and importance. Ultimately the remedy is in the hands of audiences, who too seldom express their preferences to the cinema managers; but it is also to be hoped that the new Cinematograph I ilms Act will do something to improve the situation

or is there?



Unless otherwise indicated, 'DFN' Reviews are the work of 'DFN' Reviewing Panel, consisting of Stephen Ackroyd, Donald Alexander, Max Anderson, Ken Cameron, Paul Fletcher, Sinclair Road and Grahame Tharp. Opinions expressed are the collectire opinions of the Panel.

Tale in a Teacup. Greenpark for International Tea Market Expansion Board. Directors: Ralph Keene and Terry Bishop. Script: Laurie Lee. Photography: George Still. Music composed by Lambert Williamson, and conducted by John Hollingsworth. Editor: John Trumper. Distribution: T. and non-T from ITMEB. 17 mins.

A String of Beads. Greenpark for 1TMEB. Producer and Director: Ralph Keene. Script: Laurie Lee. Photography: George Still. Musical Director: John Hollingsworth. Original Music: Elizabeth Lutyens. Editor: John Trumper. Distribution: T and non-T from ITMEB. 25 mins.

'T' for Teacher. W. M. Larkins Studio for the Tea Bureau under the Supervision of Voice and Vision Ltd. Verse: Roger MacDougall. Music: Francis Chagrin. Animation: Peter Sachs.

This series sponsored by the Tea Bureau comprises three films of very different type. The first sets out to tell the story of tea, its origin in China, the starting of the first plantations in Assam in 1823, its introduction into this country and growing popularity until it became a national institution. The approach is simple and direct. There is a certain amount of historical reconstruction at the beginning, which is not wholly successful. The film then proceeds to describe clearly and well the work involved from plantation to factory before the finished packet of tea is ready.

'T' for Teacher takes over at this point and adds some useful hints about how to make a good cup of tea. It is a cartoon in the Lotte Reiningerr tradition, the figures being in silhouette form.

A String of Beads, a story documentary set in the plantations of Assam, is the centre piece of the series. It is a moving and imaginative film which successfully avoids the almost inevitable comparison with Song of Ceylon. It tells of the marriage of Ramdas and Mangri who work in the tea gardens, of their home and the child that is born. The film is lyrical before all else, it catches the mood of the young couple against the natural beauty of the plantations. It does not pretend to do more than this. The rhythm of the film is consistent throughout. Yet no theatrical distribution can be obtained, which confirms one's suspicions that the exhibitors and renters do not know their business.

Downlands. Greenpark for COI in association with Film Centre. Direction: Charles de Lautour and Humphrey Swingler. Photography: George Still. Distribution: CFL, 18 mins.

This is the last of The 'Pattern of Britain' series which has ranged up and down these isles and caught the many moods of the changing countryside. Downlands adds its impressions of rolling farmlands which have been cultivated intensively by succeeding generations. The film tends, however, to be rather flat, due probably to the series of accidents which upset and delayed production. While it has none of the memorable shots which make other of the films in this series stick in one's mind, it obviously belongs to the pattern and adds its piece to the picture of Britain.

# NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Park Here, Greenpark for CO1. Producer: Ralph Keene. Director: John Eldridge. Camera: Martin Curtis. Distribution: CFL. 17 mins.

Theme. The difficulties encountered by the townsman when he visits the country and the solution which would be afforded by the creation of National Parks.

Comment. This film falls into two parts, which bear little relationship to each other. In the first an actor disguised as a railwayman deserts his engine for a bicycle and gets into difficulties on an expedition into the country. This, since he does not know that hay burns, cows stray and his attractive girl friend has forgotten to pack a sandwich, is hardly surprising. The second part shows some of the beautiful unspoiled tracts of country which could be declared National Parks and provided with proper facilities for visitors.

The idea of National Parks is a good one, as the experience of Canada and the United States has shown; this film, however, will do nothing to convince you of their value in Britain, or even to explain what the idea really means.

The Centuries Between. Merlin Films for British Gas Council. Producer: M. Hankinson. Director: G. Gunn. Camera: J. Flack. Distribution: BGC non-T. 18 mins.

This is a film about a rural community whose small, privately owned gas works goes into liquidation, throwing the inhabitants back on more primitive methods of heating and cooking. A petition is organized and addressed to the large gas undertaking in the nearest town, and when enough potential consumers have agreed to take the supply the pipes are laid. So gas returns to the village and everybody, it is to be presumed, lives happily ever after. It is competently, but by no means brilliantly, made and carries out its not very inspiring task with fair success. But one looks in vain for a real touch of imagination in the direction or a true spark of humanity in the acting. In short, it is a film without feeling, and that is a cardinal sin.

Scrap Book for 1922, Pathé. Produced by Peter Baylis, in association with Leslie Baily. The pages turned by Patric Curwen. Narration: John Snagge. Film Editor: A. Milner-Gardner. Musical Director: Hal Evans.

The Year is 1922. Here is a film following closely the pattern set by the BBC in its popular series. Perhaps the thought of sitting for over half an hour through vintage library material, with all its speeded-up projection and grotesque fashions, might seem a little terrifying. But somehow the film is always interesting and sometimes very funny. Peter Baylis has selected his twenty-fiveyear-old celluloid with discretion and has assembled it with skill, and while his desire for artistic perfection might have inclined him to make rather more ruthless use of the scissors it is obvious that he has allowed one eye occasionally to wander over to the box-office. For surely Scrapbook, with its three thousand and something feet, is the right length for the trade-just

as far as any documentary film can be. And anyway a mighty lot appears to have happened in what at the time seemed a pretty ordinary year as years go. In between a rather cliche start and a flowery ending Mr Patric Curwen turns the pages with scarcely a rustle.

Dover '47. Data through COI for Ministry of Health. Producer: D. Alexander. Director; Mary Beales. Photography: W. Suschitzky. Distribution: T and non-T CO1. 10 mins.

Theme. Dover rebuilding.

Comment. Here, at last, seemed to be a documentary which had managed by the lively approach of its makers to scramble out of the general rut. Starting off in parody of the typical travelogue's style in dealing with such an historic setting as the English Channel coast, and with Alice Duer Miller's 'White Cliffs of Dover' in our minds, it halted us abruptly, by a nicely-conceived gag, as it appeared about to pursue a sedate course through the tangible history of a long-established town. Switching then to a gentle probe, under the leadership of its American commentator, into Dover's immediate and future rebuilding plans, it takes us through the town to meet some of the ordinary inhabitants: and then concentrates on a new, and somewhat isolated, estate where massproduced temporary houses are being erected. Here we discover, to the surprise of the American commentator as well (he appears in the film), that not only do the roads bear American names, and so perpetuate Dover's link with wartime visitors, but that the English commentator (who has also appeared in the film—he tried to convince us he was an ordinary Dover chap by being discovered lolling over a monument) is living in one of the temporary houses. The film ends with a 'wisecrack', which so embarrassed the American commentator that his feeble delivery of it makes one feel at any moment an all too familiar voice will roll out over the last shot of the castle ruins to say, 'And now we leave this ancient town . . .

Why doesn't this film come up to the expectation of its more imaginative handling of its subject than is found in the common run of films? Partly because it leaves a lot of questions unanswered about the subject itself-and there is the time to answer them. Also, it misses opportunities of broadening its interest by not taking us, for instance, into the finished temporary houses to meet those people lucky enough to have one: and to learn how they got them, how they like them and how they enjoy going what appear to be some miles into the town when the buses aren't running. But more, I think, it falls down on technicalities; for, in spite of competent and often pleasant photography, uncertain direction (watch particularly the scenes of the castle gatekeeper shutting the door, the city engineer's office and the group at the end of the film) and weak casting irritate where there should be no irritation. The English commentator is far too colourless a personality beside his American colleague to give a balanced effect, especially for

overseas audiences.

# NEW FILMS FROM CANADA

Bronco Busters, 16mm. Sound, Running Time: 10 minutes. Produced 1946 by the National Film Board in the Canada Carries On Series.

Theme, A break in the hard life of venturesome and unventuresome cowboys while they compete in or watch (respectively) the annual Calgary Stampede (rodeo).

Comment. Bronco Busters starts as it ends, with scenes of horses roaming Alberta's foothills—with here and there a cowboy having a hard life ... 'The Calgary Stampede draws spectators from all across the continent to watch top-notch riders pit their skill against the strength and cunning of the four-legged outlaws.' We see the spectators at the end of the draw, so to speak, looking at the exhibition of agricultural machinery which is part of the Stampede, and settling into their seats.

The show begins: wild horse riding, calfroping, bramah bull riding, and the bulldogging,
make up the main events. Final event of the big
show is the chuck-wagon race. 'We see the wagons
loaded with all the supplies needed by men riding
the ranges, pelting along to the finish line...
When the last event is over, back to the ranges go
the ranch hands and the wild horses. *Bronco Busters* ends as it started, with scenes of horses
roaming Alberta's foothills.'

And there's really very little else to say about it. Any film about animals, horses in particular, gets by, because, however static the film, the animals can be counted on to move—usually with a superb grace and beauty. Here the movement of the bulls and calves and horses (sorry, 'fourlegged outlaws') may not be so graceful, but is fast and unexpected enough to create an interest in what is a pretty ordinary piece of film-making: a film which might have been made anywhere in the North American Continent. It obviously loses some visual interest from being shown in black and white when originally made in colour (owing to shortage of prints); but in black and white it merits no more than the term 'programme fill-up'

(The quotations are from the National Film Board's information sheet.)

Tomorrow's Citizens, 35 mm. Black and white. Sound. Running time: 10 min. National Film Board, Canada Carries On series, 1947.

This film purports to 'examine the qualifications of contemporary educational method and policy in the light of an age that has released new natural energies, to be used for or against mankind'. All that in ten minutes. Of course, it does not succeed. It has bitten off more than it can ehew, and suffers from severe indigestion, with its accompanying wind. True, the problem with which the film deals-whether our own inventions will destroy us—is of supreme importance, but a journalistic approach to it, which is by turns slick, shallow and smug, is using the methods of the alchemist to solve problems of unclean physics. The film, in fact, does the very thing it is intended to discourage; it applies preatomic thought to the atomic age.

Let's Look at Water. 16 mm. Black and white, Sound. Running time: 20 min. Produced 1947 by the National Film Board for the Department of National Health and Welfare.

A straightforward, not very ambitious, account of how a Canadian city's water supply is purified. The opening sequence reviewing the ways in which water serves all forms of life is more than a little banal at times. That water is used for drinking and washing hardly needs to be stressed to any audience, however specialized. But when the film gets on to describing how a municipal supply is gathered, purified and distributed it does summarize with adequate clarity a number of facts that should be stored somewhere in every citizen's mind. They would perhaps remain longer in store if more reliance were placed on visual demonstration and less on the expository power of the implacable voice which is becoming a characteristic of many Canadian films.

Klee Wyck (Canadian Artists Series No. 5). 16 mm. Colour. Sound. Running time: 15 min. Produced 1946 by the National Film Board.

Klee Wyck is the name the Indians gave to the late Emily Carr, a Canadian painter who, we are told, found her inspiration 'in the towering forests and dying Indian culture of British Columbia'. In this film the camera pans up firtrees and down totem-poles, across wooded ridges and over Indian villages. It tracks into one canvas and away from another. Seldom does the eye have a chance to rest and take in either the scenery or Miss Carr's work. The director has been faced with that most difficult of all problems, how to make a motion picture on an essentially static subject, and the peripatetic camera is his solution. But in choosing it he falls out of the frying pan of dullness into the fire of obscurity and confusion.

Third Dimension. 16 mm. Black and white. Sound. Running time: 19 mins. Produced 1946 by the National Film Board in co-operation with the Sculptors' Society of Canada.

This is a survey of modern Canadian sculpture. The principal sculptors of the Dominion are seen at work, and the methods they use are outlined in terms understandable to the lay observer. There is a detailed demonstration of the method of making a plaster cast from a clay original, and another of the stages by which the clay figure is built up. In fact, the emphasis is principally on the mechanical aspects of the art and there is something lifeless about the film as a result. Why, one wonders, don't the sculptors tell us something about the complexities and fascinations of working in the round, explain what they are aiming at and show how they achieve it? Surely there can't be a standing order in Ottawa that no one but the commentator shall open his

Montreal By Night. Produced by the National Film Board in the Canada Carries on Series.

Theme. One of Canada's most rapidly expanding

cities at night 'in all its facets of trench and English, industry and art, historic and modern'.

Comment. There are some strange claims (apart from the above) made in the National Film Board's information sheet about this average film: 'The film approaches Montreal at night showing that 40 per cent of the population is bilingual... Using the floodlights and filming places never filmed before, the picture achieves unique effects in its documenting of Montreal. The Canada Carries On unit of the National Film Board has made a film on upcoming Montreal, using a technique never applied in the filming of that city before.'

While it may be perfectly true that as far as Montreal is concerned some of the effects may be unique, and the technique new, merely because no other film has been made in this way about this particular city at night, it would be as well for the writers of these 'blurb sheets' to realize that this kind of film has been as competently, and often more imaginatively, made about practically every other major city in the world. Such claims can only do a disservice to the technicians who made the film—and to the film itself, since the audiences in the 60 different countries to which it is being distributed will expect something out of the ordinary.

Viewed as a modest little film about a strange city, it is pleasant enough, if uninspired; but lacks the warmth of contact with the city's inhabitants which would have been achieved by recording their voices as well as their faces. It takes us to the usual haunts of any city at night; the amusement park, the night clubs, the deserted offices and business centres cluttered up with the debris of the day, the social clubs, the suburban homes, the resting factories, the busy newspaper presses. But after all that, Montreal as Montreal remains much of a mystery nor are we much nearer to understanding what Canadians are or feel or do. Just another 'programme fill-up'.

This film shows up the limitations of 16mm, on which size it was viewed, because night photography suffers most from a bad print or mediocre projection equipment—and both are more common to sub-standard than to 35 mm. film making.

Condition Improved. Produced by the Canadian National Film Board for the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Department of National Health and Welfare. 16 mm. B. and W. 33 mins.

Theme. The part played by various forms of occupational therapy in the treatment of injury, disease and mental illness.

Comment. Occupational therapy is now generally accepted as an essential adjunct to rapid recovery after accident or illness. As a comprehensive survey of the many kinds of remedial exercises used today, this film does a useful job. The treatment is simple and straightforward, but it may be questioned whether such a survey, which consists essentially of a series of linked examples, is really the most convincing approach to the subject, for in attempting to cover such a wide field details are glossed over and there is little time available for the study of individual cases. The best sequences are those dealing with the recovery of children after infantile paralysis and the treatment of stammering and neurotic conditions. In these the film really comes to life, but they are tantalizing in their brevity and each could have provided enough material for a full length film on their own

# SURVEY OF FILMS—Summary of UNESCO's Report on Technical Needs

# NO 2-CZECHOSLOVAKIA, POLAND and YUGOSLAVIA

THE THREE countries considered in this issue now have nationalized film industries. They are also characterized by their growing documentary film production.

#### Czechoslovakia

All production, distribution, import and export and exhibition of films was nationalized in August 1945. A special film department of the Ministry of Information was made responsible for launching the new State industry operating through the Czechoslovak Motion Picture Company. This company has separate sections for all types of production, distribution and exhibition, including one for research and education. The Trade Unions have a direct share in control and management.

The number of cinemas operating today is roughly the same as pre-war, though considerable expansion is planned. The present position is as follows:

35 mm

16 mm

	cinemas	cinemas
In Bohemia,		
Moravia,		
and Silesia	1,631	.39
In Slovakia	245	23

The figure for weekly cinema attendances in 1946 was approximately two million.

There is considerable variety in the films shown, a far wider range of foreign films being imported and given general distribution than is customary in Britain. Percentages of all films shown from mid-1946 to mid-1947 is as follows:

	Features	Shorts
Czechoslovakia—new	4.5	37
reissued	21	
USSR	23	25
UK	19	18
USA	18	15
France	11	5
Sweden	3	_
Switzerland and Belgium	0.5	_
Total number of films	515	340

Home production is in a relatively fortunate position. Studios are fairly extensive and well-equipped, though there is a shortage of trained technicians. Before the war between 30 and 40 feature films were produced each year. The 1946 figure was 12, but for 1947 25 films are planned and for 1948, 30. There are also a number of short film units (including one puppet film department), with an output in 1946 of 50 films. Three weekly newsreels are produced and a news magazine twice a month.

# Films in Education

The use of films in schools is being developed considerably. This is the responsibility of the Czech Cinematographic Society under the Ministry of Education, with a similar body working in Slovakia. The Society has the right to produce its own films for schools, but in 1946 only 5 were made in this way though 15 are planned for 1948. These films will be 16 mm silent. Most of the films at present used by schools are documentaries made by other sections of the industry. The Society's library contains some 125 titles, mostly re-edited German material, but it is hoped to extend its range by exchange arrangements with Switzerland, England, America and

Sweden. In the country's 17,000 primary and secondary schools there are some 2,000 projectors (as against 300 pre-war) but only 50 of these are sound. The Czechoslovak Film Institute also plays an important part in the educational field. It has a library of film classics and is responsible for the improvement of technical standards in production and exhibition, and for the training of technicians. Training facilities are well advanced. In conjunction with the Academy of Dramatic Arts, the Institute provides full courses for all grades of technicians and artists.

# **NEWS FROM UNO**

16 MM COPIES of *The People's Charter*, the first documentary made by the UN Film Board, can now be got from the Central Film Library. It should be very useful for showing to groups of older students and adults who may be studying any aspect of the world as it is today.

During the next seven months ten documentaries on widely varying subjects will be made (under the direct financial sponsorship of the UN Film Board) by ten member nations.

International Realist, with Lewis Gilbert (of GB) as Director, are at work on the film allocated to Britain under the scheme. The film is at present called *Common Ground* and sets out to show the community of interest between people in different counties who work at the same jobs.

The UN Film Board is preparing an international catalogue of films to which all nations are being asked to subscribe by sending in all information available about all films, features and shorts, made by each of them.

Two film strips are already available for free distribution from UN Headquarters. Five others are being made. These will be ideal for use by adult education groups and will be issued with accompanying charts and teaching notes in a variety of languages.

Edinburgh first and then London by the spring is the timetable for the exhibition of *Our Road to Peace* now on its way from New York. After London it will go off on tour of the Provinces.

#### Poland

All branches of the film industry in Poland were also nationalized in 1945. A State enterprise, Film Polski, is the responsible agency supervising all activities including research, training, and educational films which are the business of the Polish Film Institute. Production is the only field open to private undertakings which can hire the nationalized studios.

Before the war Poland had some 800 cinemas, but most of these were destroyed. Today 560 are in operation with a seating capacity of 230,000. Present weekly attendances are in the neighbourhood of half a million. For the size of the popula-

tion cinema facilities and cinema going are by no means highly developed.

It has been estimated that 180 feature films a year are required. In 1945-46 Poland imported from:

USSR	 	 40 films
France	 	 43 ,,
Sweden	 	 10 ,,
Switzerland	 	 2 ,,
USA	 	 a few

In 1947 contracts were concluded for 40 British films, 65 American and some French. Poland also imports now from Czechoslovakia and Italy.

Production facilities are very limited, much equipment was destroyed. Although only two feature films have been completed, 150 news reels and long documentaries and 50 short documentaries were made by June 1947.

#### Educational Films

Educational films are the concern of the Polish Film Institute which is responsible for production, distribution, research, film societies, and the training of technicians. The Institute has two studios and has produced films on a wide range of subjects. A Scientific Film Institute has also been established. There are 500 16 mm silent and 10-20 sound projectors available for school use on a travelling basis; only a few schools have their own machines. The Institute's Central Film Library contains 250 titles, the majority silent. Special series of shows are also arranged for adult audiences.

Despite the initiative being shown in all fields, Poland is still gravely handicapped by the losses it has suffered. The shortage of equipment and trained technicians is acute.

# Yugoslavia

Before the war there was practically no film industry in the country. Cinema going and the use of films for other purposes had hardly been developed. The new Government has set about remedying the deficiency. A central Cinema Commission has been created, to work with similar commissions in each of the six federated republics. Its primary function is to build studios and develop production, and to expand the number of cinemas and mobile projection units. At present there are only 120 to 150 small cinemas, poorly equipped. Weekly attendance is just over half a million. Of the films shown in 1947 75-85 per cent were Russian, 10-15 per cent French, with one Yugoslav film. An agreement has also been concluded for a number of films from Czechoslovakia. In general the country is relying therefore on Eastern Europe for its programmes. Home production has hardly got under way. Apart from newsreels a few documentary films have been made so far, though future plans are ambitious.

# Educational Films

Educational film use is undeveloped for the same reasons. 5 films are, however, scheduled for production this year, and a special educational film studio is planned. 300 projectors are available. There is therefore a great need for equipment of all kinds and for contact with educational film activities in other countries.

# Recording Angel?

# A CLOSE-UP OF KEN CAMERON

The Story by Alex Shaw

shah Jehan lavished every care on the building of the Taj Mahal. He sought perfection. Another seeker after the same quality is building his dream palace in an isolated corner of the Crown Film Unit Studios at Beaconsfield. Locally known, affectionately or derisively, according to the feelings of the speaker, as Cameron Castle, it is one day to be the hub of an eventual Palace of Perfect Sound. Indeed, were it not for the Ministry of Works, there is no doubt that its designer also would have insisted on porphyry, alabaster and lapis lazuli being used in the construction (always provided, of course, that they were acoustically suitable).

This building represents the latest step in Ken Cameron's efforts to record better and better sound, an ideal which he has fanatically pursued ever since he started in films.

Sound and music are his masters and seldom has there been a more willing slave. Presumably he takes in food (although it is possible that this, in his case, is done via the ear and that the nourishment is sound waves). And there would not seem to be much time for sleep in a spare time devoted to concerts and the esoteric'literature of sound recording. In any case, sleep for him is not the waste of time it is with lesser mortals; he can hear in his sleep as I have many times proved, Sleeping peacefully at concerts or the opera he will yet, on waking, comment sourly that the flutes were a bit rough in the slow movement or that a singer was off-key. And lo and behold, they were! The fact that he strenuously denies having slept at all is nothing to do with the case. I have witnesses.

Not content with listening and then trying to reproduce the perfect sound, he takes a passionate interest in musicians and will talk of a Walton. Britten, Alwyn or Abady with a critical enthusiasm usually reserved for football teams. In fact that is what they probably are to him, for in his mind there seems to be something very much akin to the football divisions up and down which the composers move according to their latest works. Players he is not so interested in. I think he feels that they stand between him and that perfect sound he is always seeking, yet, in spite of this, few of us who lived through the terrible day when the signed photograph of Dame Myra Hess fell from his office wall will ever believe that he is quite blind to their talents. No ominous geese ever created such a feeling of impending

He often appears to be a forecast of the Man of the Future; highly specialized, obsessed, an Ear-Man. Certainly a list of the films which he has recorded—Coastal Command, Target, Listen to Britain, V.1. and Instruments of the Orchestra among them—suggests a vast range of sounds hunted, caught, dissected and put on celluloid. But his passion for American stage musicals shows that the man is still human. Anybody who can fly from Ottawa to New York for a few hours specially to see Allegro, is clearly an endearing character.

Ken comes from the fanatic-producing city of Glasgow. While studying to be an electrical engineer he spent his spare time at the movies and particularly those shown by the Glasgow Film Society. Here he heard Grierson and the inevit-



The Drawing by M.A.

able spell was east over him. From that day for-

ward he determined to be a sound recordist. He spent the next summer as an apprentice at the GPO Blackheath (ten shillings a week) and then joined the unit as what he himself calls a sound stooge (eighteen shillings and ninepence a week). Those were the days of The Fairy of the Phone and Bill Blewett. Ken did a lot of stooging. Then came that strange hiatus repeated in so many of our lives when he went and stooged on quota quickies at Welwyn instead. Cavalcanti recalled him to the GPO and finally, a BSc safely under his hat, he did his first day's work as a fully fledged sound recordist in Manchester with the Halle doing a score of Gaillard's for Forty Million People. From then on it was a pursuit of better sound. With frequency and modulation, decibel and supersonic, by mike and by cycle, through trial and through tears, he sought prefection. The human voice, the orchestra, the

An enthusiast himself he is a connoisseur of other enthusiasts. Thus the stormy collaboration between himself and Muir Mathieson has been more than usually fruitful. Lach sees in the other a fellow-maniac and together they have done much for our films.

natural sound, these were his raw materials. Their

impeccable reproduction, his aim.

Now, at the almost tender age of 31 (he has been described as 'the oldest thirty-oner in the world') he finds new enthusiasms. The National Film Board of Canada has found in him an ardent gospeller; bigger and better scoring stages are planned; new materials are to be used for walls and ceilings; stereophonic sound is in the offing. Where it will all end is a matter for conjecture. Will he go mad trying to record the unbearable or will he find new worlds to conquer? I think I shall telephone him and ask him it he can get on the track, the squeak of a bat or the noise of the stars, for the new, the difficult, the impossible, is his joy. Documentary owes much to this pioneering attitude of his

# **BOOK REVIEW**

We Made a Film in Cyprus. By Laurie Lee and Ralph Keene (Longmans, Green and Co, London—New York—Toronto, 12s. 6d.)

FOR THE undoubtedly vast body of people interested in how films are made, this book should have considerable appeal. It is conceivable, however, that the discriminating reader of travel books will find it even more absorbing. The film fan will look for rather more technical detail than is provided by Ralph Keene in his half of the text, but no-one could call for a livelier portrait of Cyprus and its people than sparkles from the pen of Laurie Lee. Lee was the script writer for Cyprus is an Island, and he is less concerned to reveal the processes of cinematic gestation than to provide us with a visually exciting picture of modern Cyprus. Sometimes his indefatigable search for the dramatically evocative word or the unexpected visual analogy leads to over-rich writing but the volume is slim and the problem of digestion not, therefore, acute. The illustrations are lovely and generally to the point of the text, and most readers will be interested in the film's scenario which is printed as an appendix.

We should do well perhaps to prepare for a spate of such books (scratch a documentary film-maker and you will find a literary man) and future practitioners would do well to study this rather fine example of what may prove to be a much misused genre. They will observe that one problem remains unsolved. Should the book be intimately done, written about the film-makers in their spark-striking relationship with their actors, or should it be a travel book about the place? Can it be both, as is here attempted? It is significant that the whole book comes suddenly and brilliantly to life when Laurie Lee writes about the film-makers' Easter Day party with their Cyprian hosts. Here is something of the necessarily picaresque quality of such documentary film-making.

And, finally, what are we to make of Laurie Lee's penultimate words? 'I thought of the film we had prepared, which was now ready to be made; but I thought more of that film we could never make, of the things that could not be said.'

Heaven help us if film-makers start to come back with their real achievements in their books and not in their films.

# OPEN LETTER FROM A SCHOOLTEACHER

DEAR MARJORIE: I'm so sorry you weren't able to get up to Manchester in November after all, but at last I'm keeping my promise to let you know all about the Conference on Visual Units organized by the Scientific Film Association.

There were plenty of people there—teachers like us, local education authorities, university people, education experts (whatever those are). film producers, people from the Central Office of Information, in fact someone from every organization you can think of.

Mr Hughes, the PPS of the Ministry of Education and Chairman of Committee A, gave the first talk on Friday evening and he explained all about Committees A and B-why they started, what they've done and what they plan to do. He made it all very clear and easy to understand. After that we were meant to see some films but the projector or something wouldn't function so that was all until Saturday morning when Mrs Marcousé (she's the secretary of Committee A) started off the day's proceedings by telling us about the Visual Units that are being madehow the ten now planned are to be experimental and go out to selected LEAs so as to see how they work in different schools. She named and outlined all the Units and then showed us the main film of Houses in History (it also has wall charts and models which we saw). Later on someone in the discussion said that it wasn't a subject which was really suitable for a film and I must say I didn't

like it very much-I wouldn't use it because I think my children would find it hard to follow and a bit dull.

Next came the Water Supply Unit which hadn't yet been approved by the Ministry of Education but which should be out soon after you get this letter. It was meant for 12-14 year children (on the average) and included one main film, 11 silent ones, 2 film strips, wall charts and teacher's notes. We saw the main film-(I'm afraid it would make the children in your area laugh a bit because it didn't even mention all the houses in the country which depend solely on individual rain-water storage tanks for their supply!) However it was a new approach and I think it could be very useful in the schools. There were a lot of criticisms afterwards but I approved of its clarity and its slow commentary-not a word too much. People seemed to think it was rather like a 'mystery tour'-that they ought to have shown where the water went before they showed it leaving the river; others thought that the diagrams were too involved for children, that they were not simple enough and did not give any ideas of proportion in size of pumphouses and tanks, and that the children would ask 'why' over a lot of points which should have been clear.

After this we saw some of the silent films of the Unit—I don't think the ones showing how various pumps worked were much use and two other people said it was waste of time to make them.

Then we saw the film-strips—I liked them, though later on one of the film people said they were badly made. I still feel they'd be popular with my class. The charts weren't so good-most of them seemed more for older children and the simpler ones were rather dull-I'd rather allow the class to make their own from the rest of the material.

That afternoon all the people who had been in on the making of the Unit described what had happened from the first idea in March, 1945, until now. It does seem awful waste of time, money and energy to take three years over one Unit, doesn't it? And someone said it had cost £16,000! The COI man said he thought £8,000 would be nearer but he wasn't sure. It was quite interesting to hear about all the work, but I did feel it was a lot of fuss over something which will admittedly be very useful, but not all that essential. Still, it is an experiment and the people who made the Unit seem to think it is going to be successful. The delegates were full of questions and criticisms but didn't get very clear answers.

In the evening we saw another Unit meant to be used by the students in training colleges, etc. themselves and not for teaching as such. Near Home was the name of the main film; I thought it was very good and only wish I had the time to get my class going on something like that, I didn't quite get the point of the ciné-panorama but the silent film was excellent. In fact, I liked this unit, Local Studies, best of all and think it should go down very well in the training colleges and with older children. It will be useful because of the lack of 'teaching' in it.

Next morning we saw the films we should have seen on Friday and then Mr Thom (Secretary of Committee B) talked about the work of his Committee. He told all about the panels who are working on films for different age groups and then said that every film was to have as Educational Adviser a teacher of the appropriate age group who would be seconded on full pay for a term or longer in order to be in on all the filmmaking and learn a bit about the technicalitiesthat would be fun to do, wouldn't it? He also mentioned apparatus supply and the Regional Film Libraries which are to be set up so that we can go to see films and Visual Units before actually ordering them for use. That seems a good idea! Again, there was a hot discussion and people aired quite a lot of grievances about the length of time taken on making Units, about difficulties over apparatus, about bad co-operation from LEAs and about the weak points in the films. Unfortunately the Committee people didn't seem really to answer all the questions we asked; lack of time, I suppose.

That afternoon we heard Mr Green on the need for research in Visual Education. I felt that he was obsessed by psychological experiments and some of the ones he quoted seemed quite irrelevant. Also, he seemed very exercised over whether children learned best visually or otherwise—I though the only people who could learn wholly visually were the deaf-and-dumb and. after all, we were discussing Visual Aids in

Education, not Visual Teaching.

Anyhow, the Conference was worth going to and I wish you had been able to get there. I don't imagine I'd ever have the time or the wish to use a whole Visual Unit but I suppose someone might have. Anyhow, it does show that the powers-thatbe are trying to do something and it's very interesting to see how they do it!

Yours sincerely,

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#### CORRESPONDENCE

six: In the article reprinted in your last issue concerning the making of our film A Stitch in Time, on the subject of industrial exteriosis, Philip Mackie claims that his history 'is untypical in one particular only, everything went smoothly'. Apart from this evidence of a short memory, there are in his lively account a number of statements which seems to us to call for comment. In what follows, the figures correspond with the numbering of his paragraphs.

In paragraph (4) he says 'The PCO...rings up Hector Bathos, and finds that he is free'. It is of course, true that our producer frequently carries out personally investigations and the writing of treatments undertaken by this Company, particularly in the fishing season. It was presumably, during one of his absences that Mackie's telephone conversation with Bathos took place.

In paragraph (5) there are two points. 'The briefing meeting is attended by the PCO, Bathos, the Public Relations Officer at the Ministry of Help, and the experts on exteriosis'. The producer, we believe, was still fishing.

'After the meeting, Bathos and the PCO have a drink together...' This interested us and we asked Bathos about it. He reassured us—he said he paid.

In paragraph (6) we find, 'Production Contracts then send a formal commissioning letter (for a two-reel treatment at a fee of £65) to Nadir Films.' Mr Mackie's account suggests that no answer to this letter was ever sent. Our files show that, in fact, our Business Manager protested at once that the fee was too high. Also, the subject required considerable investigation involving some three or four months of Bathos's time, accommodation and transport. For this, in reply, Production Contracts offered the sum of £5, and a lengthy exchange of letters followed which became more and more pained as it developed. In order to settle differences of this kind our Business Manager sometimes even has to put on his bowler hat, take his umbrella and make a personal visit to Norgeby House. This upsets him very much as it interrupts his football pools.

Paragraph (7) says, 'The Treasury, after some thought, give their authority.' We regard this as a statement of considerable importance. The use of the words 'after some thought' puts Treasury officials at a much higher ethnographic level than we had imagined.

Paragraph (8): 'Hector Bathos sends in his treatment.' An unusually definite step for Bathos to have taken, but doubtless he was tired of waiting for the producer to get back.

Paragraph (10): 'The PCO gets Nadir Films commissioned for a shooting script, in the same way as they were commissioned for a treatment' (our italies). This time our Business Manager, we are told, merely reached for his bowler hat and umbrella and started for Norgeby House right away. The umbrella, it appears, makes admirable camouflage for the smaller types of sub-machine

Paragraph (12): 'Nadir Films send in a budget for...£3,950', etc. This implies that, knowing the global to be £4,000, we adjusted our budget to fall just nicely short of it. This does not line up with the facts. Our budget figure was £6,341 which was submitted knowing that a mar-

gin is always advisable so as Production Contracts can cut out a couple of items to make them feel good without putting the production in jeopardy. As Mackie points out, the figure was duly reduced by cutting out certain sums, including the firm's telephone bill which had unaccountably become mixed up with our Business Manager's papers, to £3,895. Subsequently, supplementary budgets brought the final maximum contract price up to £6,340. It may be of interest that the firm's telephone bill has been paid.

Paragraph (13): 'As a result of their comments, the whole of the first sequence is cut out and replaced by a single close-up of exteriosis in action.' Doubtless, poor Bathos, tired out by being in there all alone, pinch-hitting for the producer, let this one slip by in an unguarded moment.

Arising from paragraph (17), we have heard recently that the film has had a great success in the regions as a comedy fill-up, but at shows to factory workers no effect whatsoever is apparent.

You may, of course, use this letter in any way you think fit.

Yours faithfully, for and on behalf of Nadir Films Ltd, NERO NONFLAM,

Managing Director
P.S. It was discovered that the producer had gone into features.

#### Programme Planning

sir: When building up a programme for a typical Film Society session one naturally wants to include a fair proportion of documentaries. The short ones are useful as support for the main feature—to the long ones a whole evening may well be devoted.

When it comes to carrying out in practice this inclusion one finds great difficulties. In the first place there is an almost embarrassing choice of hundreds of titles from the Central Film Library catalogue (just to mention one source) and these titles do not tell one, of course, how good these films are. One feels instinctively that only some 5 to 10 per cent of these shorts would be suitable for showing to the Lilm Society type of audiences. Secondly the excellent graded catalogues prepared by various organizations are often either out of date or have been prepared with different aims in view. Even the DNL does not always help.

In short, there is only one way out—and that is to organize occasional viewing sessions of selected new documentaries for the representatives of the Film Societies and similar bodies so that they can see the films for themselves and form their own judgment. At present, the opportunities for viewing such films are so very limited, that some such scheme is surely desirable. After all, in many towns (and perhaps in many parts of London, too) it is only the Film Societies that will give the documentaries a fair chance and fight for their appreciation.

Voure atc

Chelmstord

LUCIAN PRECHNER

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#### CORRESPONDENCE

(cont.)

#### Manchester Conference

sir: I do not wish to cause affront to the organizers of the very valuable recent conference concerned with Visual Aids in Education. Such people put an immense amount of skill and hard work into the voluntary promotion of an admirable cause and they deserve all the help and encouragement we can give. I hope, therefore, that they will understand that I am trying to be constructive when I point out that most of their strenuous efforts will be wasted if they do not give their attention to the matter of adequate presentation of the material discussed.

This applies to the planning of such conferences as a whole and its psychological effect upon the audience, but much more so to the projection of films and stills.

The present difficulties of equipment, staff and organization are well known—but there is no excuse for thoroughly bad projection even if some of it is provided by the COI. It has been said that such methods are typical of the modern classroom conditions. If so, that is merely an indication that teachers need a little training in the technique—but in any case it cannot constitute an excuse for dragging down an organized display to such a level especially when it is intended as an example and a lead.

Even if adequate projectors and screens are unobtainable (and are they?) there is no excuse for projecting the film back to front, end first, off the screen or right out of focus. Surely the projectionist should be allowed and should take time beforehand to have the whole 16 mm. outfit ready for instant projection in an adequate manner. If he were given such time to prepare and adequate instructions, he could also splice the short reels together to avoid those infuriating pauses for rethreading.

The climax was reached at the SFA Manchester Conference when a complete film show was cancelled (after about 20 false starts) because 'the films were green'. If one cannot project a green film how does any film ever get shown? No, any projector which causes such havoc should be scrviced or scrapped—and sometimes those responsible for its use might be treated similarly. Meanwhile could somebody read and act upon the admirable SFA leaflet on How to Run a Film Show?

Yours, etc.,

GEORGE A. JONES

#### Film Societies

sir: I was indeed pleased to see your article on Page I of this month's DNL. An experience of mine two years ago with MGM indicates to me the source of the suggestion made by KRS that Film Societies are 'breeding grounds for leaders of anti-film attacks'.

I had occasion to write regarding 16 mm films they might have. Their reply was that I call and see Mr Russell-Roberts. I called and was astonished to learn that it was the first they had heard of Film Societies; even the great Sam Eckman appeared ignorant of our existence. He said they had no such thing in America. I recounted how we in our Society handled films. We discussed the sociological content and honesty of films whether they be documentaries or feature films. I was then shown a list of MGM films which they contemplated reducing to 16 mm and asked if I considered any would be suitable for Film Societies. I picked out two which I thought might be used. They were The Citadel and Mr Deeds I chose them because of the possibility of rousing lively discussion on their sociological honesty of content. Asked why I had chosen none of the others, I openly said I considered them rubbish, unworthy of honest straightforward discussion. In other words they were pure escapism. I emphasized at great length that we were not an alternative to cinemas. Our job was to make our members more discriminating. I asked them to give us documentaries of America equal to British documentaries. If they were worthy my members would express their appreciation in no uncertain manner. This closed the interview, every word of which was taken down in shorthand!

Since then I have received some very charming letters from Mr Russell-Roberts inviting my custom.

I strongly suspect that the KRS have been unconsciously led up the garden by MGM arising out of my interview. I am therefore most anxious to learn the answers to your two questions. I hope you will publish them—if they do reply!

Yours, etc.,

H. E. NORRIS West London Co-operative Film Society

DEAR SIR: I cannot understand the lapse of editorial good taste which permitted your columns to be used recently by Mr Eric Leslie for a particularly vicious and quite uncalled for attack on the defeated German people.

If it really is necessary to rail against 'the Bosch', two years after the war and in the midst of a desperate world-wide bid for peace, pocu-MENTARY NEWS LETTER, a specialist journal, is surely not the proper medium. I doubt whether any part of the film industry is in fact really appropriate as the spearhead of such an attack, for no thinking person will deny the contribution of the Germans to the screen whatever else they may have done to earn humanity's displeasure.

In any case, judged by our own British standards Mr Leslie's behaviour is quite inexcusable. He pounces foaming on your German contributor for the crime, mark you, of having expressed an honest opinion publicly. What would Mr Leslie say if the German scientists now working (and, incidentally, getting killed) over here in the interests of this country were to decide, in consequence of reading his remarks, that they too had better keep their finds to themselves?

No, stick to your subject, Mr Editor . . . and leave Mr Leslie to do his mischief, if he must,

elsewhere.

Yours faithfully,

GEOFFREY DANDO

17 Iverna Gardens, Kensington, London, W8 November 27th, 1947



#### CINEMA

CREDIT for the actual invention of the einematograph is difficult to apportion. It is certain that Englishmen played an important part. As long ago as 1860 Sir John Hersehel published a theory of einematography, and about 1889 a patent for a einema eamera and projector was applied for by W. Friese Greene and M. Evans. Today the einema is our great relaxation. But how many of us who go to "the movies", who watch the latest performance of our particular "star", realise what the einematograph industry owes to the workers in many branches of seience and technology, and not least to

the chemist? No other form of entertainment owes him so heavy a debt. Celluloid itself, the basis of the industry, is a chemical achievement. This must be transparent to give clear images after great magnification, resilient and tough to stand great strain. It must be so treated that the danger from fire is reduced to a minimum. The hand of the chemist is indeed traceable from the make-up of the actors to the lamps in the projectors. In the apparatus used for the soundrecording rare metals are needed: in the lenses of cameras and projectors, optical glass of the highest quality: in the colour-photography, pigments of the truest and most vivid colour. The sets for the ballrooms and palaces of the cinema's Cloudcuckoodom involve the use of large

quantities of paints, quick-drying stucco and plasters: the eostumes and draperies must be dyed. The tale is continued into the cinema theatre itself, in its decoration, its disinfection, its air-conditioning. When next you sit in your favourite einema, think for a moment of the patient work in laboratory and factory that has enabled you to see the wonders of the world or the finest product of the einematograph studio so clearly and still at so modest a price.





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VOL. 7 NO. 62 FEBRUARY 1948

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#### FEBRUARY FILLDYKE

THE dark, dank month of February is as good a time as any other to look around. There is quite a lot going on. Parliament has debated the new Films Bill, and the Committee of Inquiry is completing its investigations into the British Film Institute. Now there is the chance that the industry as a whole may be able to pull itself together and take real advantage of the opportunities offered by the Films Bill and by the dollar-saving situation, however that works out. From the Film Institute inquiry we may hope for the creation, at long last, of a real centre and focus point for all those film activities which deal with the film as an art, as a social force and as an historical phenomenon. It is to be hoped incidentally that the new British Film Academy will prove a really vigorous and forthright weapon for all those in the trade itself who are tired of extravagance on the one hand and shoddy ideas on the other.

As far as documentary is concerned the most important thing needed is a new and lively approach to the problems of film-production. We need fewer formula pictures, and more experiment, more reality (look at the Italian films), more social courage, and more gaiety and humour. One of the ways to achieve this is to widen the horizon by making closer contacts with documentary workers in other countries. A good start in this direction was made during 1947. The setting up of the World Union of Documentary after the Brussels meeting was followed in this country by the formation of a new organization called British Documentary, designed not only to look after our representation on WUD, but also to be a real actioncentre for all people connected with the documentary movement. Whether British Documentary succeeds will depend entirely on the amount of interest shown in it by its members, particularly the younger ones; and this in turn will depend on the film-making opportunities becoming a good deal more exciting than they are at present.

It will be important to seize every chance which may be offered by the new Films Act for voluntary as opposed to sponsored production. The development of the short-story type of film along documentary lines for instance is long overdue. Meantime a close watch must be kept on the sponsored field, not least as far as the Government is concerned.

Finally no one should forget that at Mexico City the Mass Media side of UNESCO was heavily strengthened. In particular there is the plan for international film production, by which countries will be asked to produce films for an agreed programme of 48 films, divided into eight series of six films each. This country can make a big contribution to such a scheme, not only in terms of direct production but also by supplying technicians to other countries whose industries are not so fully developed as our own.

#### NOTES OF THE MONTH

#### Congratulations

OUR LAST issue appeared before the announcement of the Birthday Honours, but our congratulations to Michael Balcon on his Knighthood are none the less sincere for being belated. Of all people in the British Film Industry, Balcon deserves honour, not merely for his general services (which anyone can remind themselves of by reading "Michael Balcon's 25 Years in Films") but also because of his constant insistence on honesty and sincerity. We remember, too, that he was the first to combine the experience of documentary with the experience of the feature studio.

We also congratulate Arthur Elton on his marriage to Margaret Ann Adamson, who is herself an experienced worker in documentary films, having been with the National Film Board of Canada and with Stuart Legg in New York.

#### British Documentary

THE FIRST meeting of BRITISH DOCUMENTARY took place on January 14th. It was gratifying to note that somewhere about 150 people turned up, representing every possible aspect of documentary, from the big sponsors to the boy who makes the tea. The meeting was introduced by Sir Stephen Tallents and addressed by John Grierson, who came specially over from Paris for the purpose. It looks as though BRITISH DOCUMENTARY is going to do a really important job, and everybody will await with interest the detailed working plans which the meeting commissioned the Council to draw up. The influence which BRITISH DOCUMENTARY can exert, both at home and overseas, is considerable, particularly if it sticks closely to its policy of giving the younger members of the movement the fullest part in the urgent and responsible jobs before it. Those who read the completely misleading report of the meeting in John Bouverie's Diary in the News Chronicle may rest assured that the new organization has been formed to help and not to hinder the progress of the documentary film.

#### Films and the Colonies

THE COLONIAL films conference held by the British Film Institute on Friday, January 16th, was a most interesting and well-attended meeting. Sir Stephen Tallents, John Grierson, George Pearson and others addressed the delegates and the following resolutions were suggested at the end of the conference:

It is resolved that the Government should give immediate consideration to:

- 1. The development of the Colonial Film Unit.
- 2. The provision of films for fundamental education in the Colonies.
- 3. The training of Colonies for active participation in the active production of films.
- 4. The wide extension of distribution facilities.
- 5. The training of Colonial citizens in the technique of distribution.
- 6. The development of research into the facts of both educational and entertainment films to illiterate audiences.
- 7. The provision of an informed centre to collect and collate all information on the use and production of films among the primitive.
- 8. The production of films about the Colonies for the benefit of the British Commonwealth as a whole.
- Studying the possibility of raising the funds for the encouragement of the above subject.

We hope to hear more of this most important question in the near future.

#### The Films Bill

THE BILL'S Second Reading took place on Wednesday, January 21st, and its further consideration now passes to a committee of the House. During the course of the next two or three weeks, therefore, the Bill will be subjected to a more detailed scrutiny and the various amendments tabled will come up for consideration. In the case of the provisions for 'supporting films' the documentary and specialized film producers have pointed to the need for coping with the problem of marketing conditions. Greater access to screenspace is, by itself, not enough unless documentary and short films can obtain a fairer percentage of the box-office takings.

#### Short

SCIENTIFIC Film Association Conference on Agriculture, held on January 17th, was lively and well worth listening to. The speakers included Mr Goodman and Dr Slater (Ministry of Agriculture), Mr Vesselo (Central Film Library), Mr Kenny, Mr Fell and Mr Anstey. Afterwards, in the evening, there was a film show.

\*

THE London Area Association of Film Societies has held its inaugural meeting, decided on a constitution and formed a committee. We wish them good luck.

\*

DOCUMENTARY FILM NEWS has just prepared a list of the newer documentary films suitable for showing to Film Societies. The list names about 30 films and will be brought up to date every few months. Price sixpence (post free) to Film Society secretaries.

\*

THE Ministry of Education has announced the formation of the Educational Foundation for Visual Aids. Its functions will include:

- (a) Securing production of visual aids through commercial undertakings and other channels.
- (b) Purchasing or obtaining visual aids for disposal to local education authorities, schools, libraries and other educational institutions.
- (c) Arranging at suitable centres for the exhibition, storage and servicing of visual aids.
- (d) Assisting the formation of regional and local libraries on visual aids.
- (e) Facilitating the interchange of visual aids with the Commonwealth and foreign countries.
- (f) Arranging for the collection and dissemination of information on visual aids.

FOLLOWING the University Films' Conference held last November, it has been decided to hold a meeting of delegates in February with the intention of setting up a Films' Council to enable Universities in the British Isles to exchange ideas and look into problems of production and distribution and accessibility of films useful to the student or professor.

#### 999

KINE WEEKLY wins the prize for the best headline of last month! A short excerpt from the British Council's annual report mentioning the production of films by the Central Office of Information is headed

BRITISH COUNCIL FILMS A new Odeon Service.

Well, well! Rank marches on.

#### Ken Cameron asks

As usual, we must remind readers that the views expressed in any article (even one written by a member of the Board) do not necessarily coincide with those of the Board. -ED.

#### What Shall It Profit a Man?

THE body responsible for the organization and the regulation of the working lives of those engaged in the technique of British film production is known as the Association of Cine and Allied Technicians. This rather implies a proficiency in technical executance as opposed to the more creative work of the artist. This of course is not intended, and a film always has been and always will be known as the work of a director, or a writer, or a producer. The names of those who actually expose the film are rarely familiar to the audience. Perhaps that is a little unfortunate, but the lights of the more functional of the population are apt to be hidden beneath bushels.

The technician is, after all, a very important person. The most far-reaching of films of educational or social significance would for ever remain in the minds of those who conceived them were it not for the individuals who press the right knobs at the right time. But in documentary as in the feature film phrases such as 'creative treatment of actuality' and 'drama in the living fact', coined by Grierson and hackneyed by his disciples, all ignore the work of the men who act as pure technicians behind the camera. And even the densest ninepenny must realize if it was put to him that the increasing number of studios soon to open or reopen in this country will create a demand for skilled technical people which will rapidly swallow up the unfortunate bulk of ACAT's list of unemployed. And what are we doing to supply that demand?

#### Apprenticeship

The new apprenticeship scheme has been planned and discussed far too long. It is absurd that a plan of such obvious benefit to producer and worker alike should only now be reaching the stage of possible operation. Hitherto a potential newcomer to the industry could achieve his wish only if he knew somebody of influence. And then he was lucky if he entered the branch best suited to him, and phenomenally lucky if he got a well thought out training, not only in that branch but also in the allied crafts of those working around him. And we cannot deny that a grounding in editing would help a cameraman to do his job well.

This apprenticeship scheme, evolved jointly by the ACAT and the BFPA, is due to start operation early this year, but as this is being written the details are not fully known. It is, however, recognized that newcomers to the industry can do so only by undergoing the training that it entails. This should do a lot to cut down the number of passengers carried by most producing organizations. That section of film production personnel which is supposed to work with its head rather than its hands is a happy hunting ground for deadheads whose contribution to the country's movie output is pathetically small.

But even when this apprenticeship plan is operating, just how are we in documentary going to

get on? The dividing line between feature and documentary is real enough by the very nature of the films and those who make them. The inevitable difference in salary ratings makes this line much more formidable. Certainly the companies who do not cater for the theatrical market cannot be expected to pay the inflated salaries now prevailing in the major studios; that is unless the results of the new Films Act are far more satisfactory than we ever dare hope. But somehow or other this fact must not prejudice documentary's chances of recruiting worth-while newcomers. And by worth while we also mean those who will not take the first opportunity of leaving the movement for the attractions outside. The tendency to get into the industry by way of the documentary film, to get a good training there, and to leave it as soon as his company is beginning to get value for the training, has been far too common during recent years. The skill and adaptation needed for our type of film is every bit as highly developed as that for the feature picture—in some ways a whole lot more so. Documentary is not a school for Denham, and must not be looked upon as such.

#### Crown Film Unit

Recent developments would indicate that a larger proportion of Government-sponsored films will be handed over to the Crown Film Unit for production. This Unit at Beaconsfield has technical facilities which are, or soon will be, no mean item in this country's film making potential. It has technicians whose standard of workmanship during the past years has shown that they are quite capable of giving the necessary quality of work. But whether it has enough of these vital factors to cope with all the work understood to be coming its way is questionable. It is not the easiest thing in the world to attract cameramen and soundmen who can undergo with equanimity the rigours of a British location in these piping days-and our best work is still done many miles from the convenience of the studio and the comfort of the home and who will produce technical excellence on the screen in spite of the war-weary equipment which is all that most of us can offer.

Certainly the blame for the dilatoriness in putting the new scheme into full operation does not lie exclusively on any one body. Such a plan to be efficient must cost money, and it is never too easy to get funds for the most worthy of causes.

#### The Law of the Closed Shop

One wonders whether the attitude of ACAT these days is entirely beyond reproach. The Union is maintaining a rigid adherence to the unwritten and quite unwarranted Law of the Closed Shop, and while bringing all its guns to bear upon trivial and doctrinaire details it has successfully avoided the maln issue of keeping its membership not only well looked after, but

united. It is certainly high time for those members who do not altogether agree with present policy to take a less inactive attitude, and to say at their studio meetings and at the annual general meeting, just precisely what they think. The reluctance of so many of the rank and file to take office and to attend the AGM leaves the way far too clear for those of an extremist viewpoint whose eagerness to be agin everything and everybody is not tempered by any readiness to see anybody else's point of view.

#### Unfortunate

Just how much the policy which is sometimes tantamount to obstructionism prevailing in some units at the moment is dictated by the General Council, and how much emerges from private decisions made by local shop stewards and their intimate confreres is hard to determine. It would be unfortunate to say the least if the Union's democratic ideals were jeopardized by the few autocrats who rule the far too rare full studio meetings, and present faits accomplis to their obedient if somewhat sheeplike satellites. They smugly stigmatize their critics as reactionary, and maintain their nattering-in-the-corner tactics under the impression that they are considered the altruistic saviours of mankind. Some of them are all too quickly developing into the self-appointed destroyers of the goose that lays the golden eggs.

#### Money for Jam

In the past ACAT has done work of inestimable value. Salary rates and working conditions have reached levels undreamt of before the war, although the cost of living has done its best to keep pace. But can the General Council not see that all upgrade movement is bound sometime to reach a point when it becomes downgrade? And when one gets near that point it is wise to stop and think for a moment. We must not proceed further with a policy which makes it impossible for an enthusiastic technician who looks upon his job as something more than a vehicle for gaining his daily bread -with butter and jam on both sides—to work all night long if the spirit moves him. The Union has done great work in the past. OK. But the sweat shop has become the closed shop, and the Half Crown Unit is rapidly becoming the Money For Jam Unit.

Of course the solution is obvious if we can only see it through. We, that is all of us who value our jobs and think our work worth while, must examine very thoroughly any action which tends in any way to discourage rather than encourage production. And if that action smacks too much of stubborn inflexibility and not enough of commonsense, then it must be gently but very firmly put in its place. It is a pity, but some of the ordinary decent members of this industry are going to have to do a little quiet propaganda work themselves to combat the skulduggery of

the film overseas

## Graduation from Newsreel

tames Harris

THE New Zealand National Film Unit, which came into being to hold the mirror to New Zealand, has now to consider the projection of New Zealand before the world. Involved in this is a change in approach to subjects and a change in style. Owing to local circumstances the change is broadly one to Documentary from newsreel.

Until six years ago few things were rarer upon the screens of New Zealand than scenes of New Zealand life. The citizen of a country thus absent from view, or seen only through foreign eyes and lenses, is apt to think his country has something lacking. Thus films of New Zealand, when they did begin to appear in quantity, not only provided a medium through which to pass wartime information to the public, but also began to fill a blank area in the outlook of the local picture-goer.

The 1941 event was the setting up of the New Zealand National Film Unit, based upon the existing Government Film Studios which had made films of scenery for the Tourist Department. The Unit's birth followed a report to the Government made by John Grierson. It's wartime raison d'etre was wartime publicity, including internal national publicity, the building of national self-confidence. The backbone of its production programme for all of its six years of development has been the newsreel NZ Weekly Review. The Government concentrated their film efforts upon newsreel for the very simple reason that there being no commercial newsreel in New Zealand this field was the easiest one in which to get wide and regular distribution. In technique however Weekly Review has averaged somewhere between newsreel and documentary, in the manner of a ciné-magazine.

At the present time Weekly Review averages about 800 ft per issue, goes out on a 17-print distribution and occupies the whole time of six or eight of the production staff. The typical reel contains three subjects, probably one sporting or topical, one of farming or country interest, and one industrial or scientific. Every few weeks though the whole reel goes to one subject, and these one-subject Weekly Reviews are in fact short documentaries made at a newsreel rate of production. The problem before the Unit at the present time is to make instructional films for local use, and documentaries for overseas, with the same speed and efficiency that it has developed in the handling of its regular weekly release.

Though the NZNFU staff have experience in documentary, nevertheless for any of them to turn from the newsreel to other types of work always proves to be difficult, the difficulty lying not so much in doing the new thing well as in doing it with the old efficiency, in keeping up the speed that went into newsreel-making to a weekly deadline when not working to a deadline at all. New Zealand films like all films need to be of good quality or they fail in their purpose, but they also need to be economically made, for many films are required and staff and gear limited.



A New Zealand National Film Unit Conference

In addition to the weekly newsreel release many of the short newsreel items have been collected into long 16 mm reels to give a general picture of the life and the country, and issued to libraries under the general title of *New Zealand Diary*. Demands from London for 16 mm silent films are also being met.

The main physical asset of the NZNFU is the Government Film Studio at Miramar, just over the hill from Wellington Heads and about six miles by road from the city. The studio, a single-story brick building, contains a 60 ft by 80 ft sound-stage, offices, theatre, 35 mm and 16 mm laboratories, cutting-rooms, workshops, vaults and garage. Thus everything from scripting and camera-repairs to dispatching the finished prints is done in the one building. Equipment includes a pair of Mitchell cameras for double-system sound shooting, single-system sound camera for newsreel work, a good assortment of modern lighting gear and a couple of portable generators. When the Unit first moved in only rack-and-tank

development was available for negative, but now all development is by machine.

Up till now NZ Weekly Review has been all capital things to the NZNFU; it has been backbone, mainspring, heart, soul and bread-andbutter. It was this weekly reel that secured wide theatrical distribution for the Unit's camerawork, and it was the six years of working to a weekly deadline that kept the Unit moving too fast to get into the rut of 'regular channels'. If the Government newsreel has to be dropped (as may happen, since distribution to a public of under two million is a difficult thing to make pay) then its loss will be regretted by New Zealand audiences, and by that small but important part of its audience, the troops in Japan. Whether the weekly reel is retained or whether it goes, the experience of turning it out has built up at Miramar a self-contained Film Unit which should be able to turn with confidence to any new tasks which the Dominion may require it to

#### **OVERSEAS NEWS**

#### UNESCO in 1948

The allocation of almost one million dollars for Mass Communications is the largest single item in UNESCO budget for 1948. It is to be spent on the following main projects. An International Ideas Bureau will employ creative artists and writers to prepare stories of world co-operation and achievement. This material will be used to promote the production of articles, books, broadcast programmes, documentary and feature films by member countries. In the field of radio UNESCO will prepare special programme material, and will set up flying squads of radio experts to maintain contact between UNESCO and the national systems. A World University of the Air will provide radio programmes putting leading personalities in education, sciences and the arts on the air. The Survey of Press, Radio and Film Needs will be extended to the Far East, Latin America and South Asia, Loans, barter

schemes and exchange of technicians are among the remedies proposed to meet the needs of countries found to be lacking essential Press radio and film resources.

The main emphasis in 1948 will be on production. UNESCO'S Film Section has already drawn up a programme of 48 films which 19 member countries are expected to include in their current production programmes. The new budget allocations are designed to stimulate further production in all fields of mass communication.

#### The Price of Peace

UNESCO has been criticized lately in one of two British journals for failing in the past year to get to grips with the problems of world education and understanding. In a recent broadcast J. B.

Cont. foot col. 1 next page

#### a German visits us

#### English Diary

the train for British Civil Personnel on my way to England.

I had scarcely finished my last shots for a documentary film-produced by the Junge Film Union, Hamburg, for the Crown Film Unit in London when the director, Mr Graham Wallace and the supervisor, Mr Arthur Elton, asked me if I would like to study film-production in England. What a question! Naturally I said 'Yes' (thinking to myself: 'this may cause you some trouble, to get permission'. And I had no hope at all.)

Who will describe my astonishment, when some weeks later I held in my hands a passport with travel-permission and Dutch Visa!

And now I find myself really in the CCG-Train, and every passing minute brings me nearer to the Channel. I have now entered a sphere, of which thousands of starving Germans dare not even dream. The first step of the fairy-tale is the dining-car. Tea with sugar and milk, meat, sweets. I feel like in heaven, though somebody next to my table says: 'Really nothing particular.'

The train stops in Utrecht. No doubt, there is a refreshment-hall. You may step in and buy cakes, real cakes and chocolate—supposing you have Guilders or Sterlings.

It was already night when we arrived at Hook of Holland. A brand-new ship, ready to take us over the Channel. My cabin heated, and with warm water and clean towels. We passed through the Customs. This time I had a good conscience. The contents of my handbags, some poor underwear, old shoes and a very old suit could not interest them. •

We are now in England, and again I find myself in a dining-car. What a car. While eating I perceive how my undernourished body begins to feel stronger. But what will happen, if the waiter asks for our ration-cards? Mr Wallace shakes his head. Ration-cards? Not in trains or restaurants.

The train hastens through fields and meadows. Everywhere I see groups of trees, standing amidst the fields. Before I came to this country I was told the English were dreary businessmen. But

#### Contd. from previous page

Priestley pointed out that countries are prepared to spend very much more on propaganda overseas than they subscribe to UNESCO. In 1947, Britain alone spent £6 million on the Foreign Office's overseas information services and the British Council. By comparison UNESCO'S total budget for a world programme is a mere £2 million, of which 75 per cent is subscribed by the USA. This financial disparity has been expressed in another way by UNESCO itself. The total cost of UNESCO's programme for world education is equivalent to the price of one light cruiser, or the price of ten bombers. Can the price of peace be assessed at such rates?

IT'S HARD to believe—but it's a fact: here I am in as I see these people must like nature; they like those trees. That means a good feeling for the beauty of this world.

> London-Liverpool St. Station. What a traffic! Buses, buses,—taxis and cars. My goodness, what a life! Well-dressed, well-fed people everywhere. But there, at the corner a grey face, bad shoes, a poor overcoat. Those eyes look hungry. They look at me as if they would ask for help. Suddenly I feel ashamed. I should speak to him. Excuse me, good man, I cannot give you anything, I'm a beggar somehow myself, coming from that big Ghetto Germany. And I have to go back there, to be hungry again and with very little hope for my future. Maybe you do not know it, but you are enjoying here peace-life, and for you this world is open. You may go where you like to.

> A cloud of noise sweeps this vision away. 'Watch your step, Sir!' 'Oh, -sorry!' (This is the first time that an Englishman calls me 'Sir'). Oh, yes. I'm in England now. Look first right and then left! What an automat a modern person is. All these seventeen days in England I looked the wrong way, when crossing a street.

> Somehow I must have been yet under the influence of war-propaganda, before I came to this town; I expected to see at least fifty per cent of all buildings flat. As I insisted upon visiting a place in London where I could see any comparable (with Hamburg or Berlin) devastations, I had to make a special trip to the South-East of London.

> Ittook mesometime before I became accustomed to see shop-windows full of clothes, sweets, foodprovisions, fruits. They told me, that everything was rationed, that's true. But in England you may eat in every restaurant as much as you like without ration-cards. I found the British Housewives quite nervous about the rationing in their country. I wish each of them could come to spend some weeks in Germany. No doubt, they would feel like in heaven after their return to England.

> Two questions asked to me made me smile: in a corner of a secret place in London I saw a balance. A sign on its top asked: Have rations altered your weight?—And in Glasgow a Scottish lady asked me seriously if German rations were much better than those in Britain.

> As a film-man I am principally interested in film-production. On my request I was shown several studios. They are quite busy there, and they are doing remarkable work. The outfit is superior. Maybe they have a bit too many people on the stage while shooting. There is a limit, above which things become too complicated, if there is too much personnel. I saw large studios and I accompanied small groups on exterior-shooting. Everywhere on my way I made the acquaintance of a lady who is much estimated on the British Islands. Her name is 'courtesy'. And in fact, politeness in public life, as it is practised in Britain, is a very agreeable thing. It makes daily life so much easier. People in this country like their personal freedom; they prefer small houses, each for one family. But at the same time they seem not to be interested in any manifestation of

A short monthly release made by the COI has just been completed and will be reviewed in our next issue 'KRO Germany 1947' makes post-war film history by being the first film made in Germany by a team of English and German technicians. In this article the cameraman of the Junge Lilm-Union gives his impressions of a subsequent visit to

individualism: London has an enormous quantity of small family-houses, but the houses of a whole area equal each other exactly.

To make a London Programme complete one must have seen a real fog in this town I had it What they call here a fog should have a special name. It would be an insult to the London Fog to call him just a fog. What I saw that evening, that was a floating white mass. This was a body; something like material, something you could touch with your hands. You could feel it slipping up your legs, permeating your clothes. It entered into your body through the nostrils, through your mouth; and some minutes later it was scratching in your throat. It pressed the smoke down from the chimneys, it penetrated through closed doors into the flats; and you could see it floating in the rooms. This white monster strangulated the traffic. Drivers had to stop their cars and had to walk home, trains crasheddamage and losses.

That night we had to grope our way from the gloomy shine of one lantern to the next, and I felt happy when at last entering the house.

Ten hours by train brought me to the cold hills of Scotland, where I paid a visit to a group of the Crown Film Unit. I was accepted like an old friend, we soon were a big family. Film people have a special 'something'. They find the way to each other quicker than other people

My way back to London seemed to me like going home (Not because of the 'Pubs'. They drink too much beer there.) I like the atmosphere of this big town. It's full of activity, full of optimism. This town is willing to rebuild what war has destroyed, its inhabitants say 'yes' to life, and it is agreeable to deal with them.

My last impression of England: the man of the Customs (I felt a bit nervous approaching the long low table). But he asked me kindly about what I had done in his country and how Hiked it, and he forgot about looking into my handbags. (Thank you, friend!)

And here I am again in the train on my way back to Germany. To say it frankly I feel like a prisoner whom they let for a time off, on his word. This train has a special car with signs at the windows 'For Germans'. The train-controlman says with a smile: 'Reserved for you.' Lam the only German this time. The other cars are quite packed. After the first two hours the last car breaks down. All passengers of that car have to move into my reserved car.

We pass the German border. Heaps of rubbish, ruins, begging children at the rails. My heart is full of controversing thoughts. It will take some time before all new impressions have seitled. But I may say already now: that country over the Channel is working hard to rebuild, it is full of activity, it wants peace

I was given the possibility to have a look on the 'other side'. One gets a botter understanding this way. Thank you for having give me this chance!

Arndt von Rautenfeld

#### NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

#### **Apologies and Corrections**

In our last issue we published some reviews of films made by the National Film Board of Canada. We would like to apologize for one 'printer's error'. In the review of *Tomorrow's Citizens* 'unclean' should have read 'nuclear'. Also, we have been corrected on several points. *Montreal by Night* was made on 35 mm. and not on 16 mm. as implied; it was made for the theatrical market and is never shown on 16 mm. *Bronco Busters* has never been shown in black and white before—the COI cannot afford colour and so the National Film Board had a black and white print specially made.

We hope that the National Film Board will accept the apologies of the Editor and we thank them for sending in corrections so promptly.

#### Here is the Gold Coast, made for COI.

Camera and Direction: John Page. Commentary: D. M. Williams. Music: Guy Warrack. Editor: and Producer: Jim Mellor.

Theme, West Africa looks West.

Comment. There is in this film a wealth of good and interesting material—well shot, pleasantly photographed, often revealing—yet the film itself fails to get the best out of it. In a story as vital as the development of a backward people, there should be no feeling in the audience that it is too long; but, more than once, Here is the Gold Coast produces the reaction of a glance at the clock.

There are two main reasons why the film lags: it meanders not a little inconclusively through its subject and it is cursed by a singularly inappropriate and entirely supplementary musical score. More attention to its story construction and to the sound track (so weak in homely natural sounds) would have turned this film, with the same material, into an outstanding job. As it is, it shows us much in the lives of the people of West Africa that will be new to English audiences: it helps us to understand and to regard sympathetically many of their problems—and it reminds us, too, that some of the biggest problems (malnutrition, for instance) are only too international.

Atomic Physics made by GB Instructional.

Producer: Frank Wells. Written and Directed by: Derek Mayne, MA. Photography: J. Parker, I. Barnett, K. Talbot. Assistant Director: S. G. Fergusson. Technical Advisor: D. H. Wilkinson, PhD. Animation sequences by: GB Animation Limited.

GB Instructional have produced a detailed technical account of the subject in the five parts of the film *Atomic Physics*, and upon it they are to be congratulated.

The film makes no attempt to be other than a clear technical exposition, on something like fifth or sixth science form level, and is therefore pretty advanced for general use. But provided its five parts (about fifteen minutes each) are screened separately, there is no doubt that most adults at all interested in the progress of science, would get much from it.

The forethought of whoever ensured the recording on sound film of Lord Rutherford and Professor J. J. Thompson is to be greatly commended. Excerpts in the film of these two scientists, describing some of their contributions to science, are used directly as part of the commentary. At the end is a short sequence of Professor Cockroft putting into words once again the condition of our survival—that atomic energy be used sensibly. (This sequence, incidentally, is a good piece of direction as is, indeed, most of the film.) Two things must be said: in a subject of such international significance it would have been a great gesture to give perhaps a little more than full credit to foreign scientists. Where the only speakers are British, and where so much of the work has been done by British science, the result is bound to seem, to some foreign eyes, insular in conception. The film would have gained in stature if we had heard but a fragment of, say, Niels Bohr or Joliot Curie speaking in their own languages.

The other criticism is a simple technical one, that the commentary was sometimes a little over full and, hence, hurried. (Did the scientists run away with the film makers?)

One looks forward to hearing that this film will reach its proper audience in schools, universities, scientific film societies, and libraries

throughout the world. In that setting it can be a great landmark in British film making.

The parts are named as follows:

- 1. The Atomic Theory.
- 2. Rays from Atoms.
- 3. The Nuclear Structure of the Atom.
- 4. Atom Smashing: The Discovery of the Neutron.
- 5. Uranium Fission: Atomic Energy.

For scientific film societies this film is readymade. But they will have to screen it in parts so that their less learned members will not be left behind.

A SCIENTIST

New Town. Halas-Batchelor for COI.

Direction and Story: Joy Batchelor and John Halas. Music: Matyas Seiber. Voices: Jack Train, Harold Berens, Dorothy Summers. Distribution: CFL. T and Non-T. 10 mins.

Theme. The theory of town-planning—without tears

Comment. There comes a time when all reviewers hanker after a film meriting nothing but praise. And so, after the spate of dull and dowdy documentaries of 1947, this slight but engaging cartoon is indeed welcome. Here are more honest laughs than in all the other films put together—and, at the same time, a clear and simple statement of the principles of town-planning.

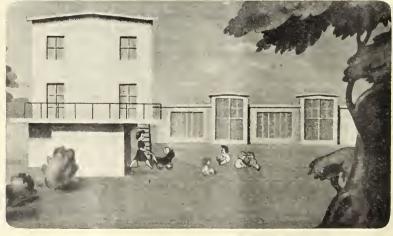
Introducing a new character, a shock-headed optimist called Charlie, this colour cartoon is one of a promised series of popular discussions of present-day developments. If the others come up to the standard of *New Town*, it will be a most successful and useful venture. Lively, imaginative, and having a very real sense of fun, the film manages in its short length to pack in as well quite a number of the best reasons for a new attitude to the building of our towns and cities—even finding time for a brief but delightful interlude with Colonel Chinstrap whose particular approach to re-housing takes the *lico* out of *pro bono publico*.

As an introduction to the still controversial subject of town-planning, it is excellent; but needs to be followed up by more factual fare. The pity of it is that it comes so late: both kinds of films were wanted even more urgently three-years ago. However, no doubt the Colonel himself would be the first to join in the sentiment 'better late than never'.

Children of the Ruins, made by Crown Film Unit for COI.

Distribution: T and non-T CFL. 10 mins. Theme. Children of the Ruins deals with the sufferings of the world's children. Today, millions are undernourished and diseased, though this was true of many before the war. But minds suffer as well as bodies. During the war children lost their parents, homes, they learnt to steal, even to kill. In pre-war Germany and Italy they were taught to honour and obey the power of a military State. Yet in many countries today the barest essentials for teaching, even pencils, are lacking. To repair some of the harm done to children's minds is one of the jobs UNESCO is trying to undertake.

Comment. Designed as a monthly release for the cinemas, Children of the Ruins sets out to give a general picture only. It relies mainly on library material and its appeal is directly emotional. But that is no excuse for a rather untidy script which tends to blunt the course of the argument. Nevertheless it is good to see a CO1 film on a world theme made for theatrical showing.



New Town

Patent Ductus Arteriosus, Crown Film Unit for Ministry of Health through CO1. Photographed by Harry Waxman, assisted by Dr Brian Stanford. Animated by Science Films Ltd. Diagrams supervised by Dorothy M. Barber. Distribution: CFL non-theatrical. 25 mins.

Theme. The pathology, diagnosis and operative treatment of Patent Ductus Arteriosus.

Comment. Though little employed, one of the most valuable uses of film in technical subjects is the recording of rare events for audiences without opportunity for seeing them. In 1942 a record was made at Hillingdon Hospital of an operation for the closure of a Patent Ductus, an event sufficiently infrequent for it to have been seen by only a small percentage of practising doctors. Since that time, owing to the system under which films put out by the COI must have the sponsorship of a Government department, it has apparently languished in obscurity. Now at last, officially sanctioned, it emerges into the light of day as a fully fledged film. Our bureaucrats need have had no qualms; this is a first-rate job which will be of great interest and value to doctors in Britain and overseas.

Patent Ductus Arteriosus is a congenital condition of the heart in which the foetal junction between the aorta and the pulmonary artery remains open after birth-until recently an incurable condition. Using the language of its audience the film covers every aspect of the condition. Beginning with a diagram sequence to explain the basic pathology, it then demonstrates the physical signs and symptoms and X-ray appearances in a case, and concludes by showing the essential parts of the operation for ligaturing the ductus with a commentary made by the surgeon himself at the time. Particularly effective is the use of synchronized sound during diagnostic auscultation and the demonstration during the operation of the alteration of sounds when closure is carried out.

Inevitably, in a film made to hinge round a record, there are a few rough edges, but the only serious criticism that can be made is of the ending. Here, to round off the film, a few pounds spent on a brief examination of the case after operation would have been well worth while.

The Centre, Films of Fact Ltd, for Foreign Office through COI. Producer: Paul Rotha. Director: J. B. Holmes. Photography: James Ritchie. Research and Assistant Direction: Langton Gould-Marks. Distribution: Non-T. CFL. 20 mins.

Theme. The working of the Pioneer Health Centre at Peckham.

Founded in 1935 the Pioneer Health Centre at Peckham soon attained a world-wide reputation. In this London suburb, two doctors originated and carried out an experiment in sociology (or, more correctly, human biology) of great scientific value. Broken up by the war, the Centre has just restarted; now with growing interest in problems of 'Social Medicine' and with the introduction of the National Health Service, its importance is probably greater than ever before. To the COI therefore all credit for promoting a film about its work; but why a film which, for all its excellencies, carries no real hint of the medical or sociological significance of this unique organization?

The Peckham 'experiment' is described by its founders as 'a study in the *living* structure of society', and its function is inextricably linked with problems of health. This is a film about a club with good recreational facilities and some



Here is the Gold Coast

kind of medical supervision attached. Is the sponsor or the film maker to blame?

In a subject of this importance it is impossible not to let the background influence one's judgment; and this is the more maddening because, if divorced from previous knowledge, this is in fact a very good film. Well written and directed, it tells after a brief introduction about the Centre and the facilities it offers, the story of one young couple who joined it. They, like so many suburban families, were bored, lonely and lacked any opportunities for the development of their personalities in a communal life. The Centre provides the chance they need, and they make the most of it until, as a part of the routine medical check, it is discovered that the young wife needs an operation. This she refuses to believe, and as a result the family gradually drift away from the Centre. In the end, of course, she weakens, has her operation, and the family again return to the Centre to find that communal focus which is missing in the lives of most city dwellers.

This story the film puts over well; the characters are natural and the interest is sustained throughout. For those who have never heard of 'Peckham' it will serve to show how one community is solving some of the problems of urban existence. That perhaps is enough for a start—but the full study remains to be made.

Children Learning by Experience. Realist Film Unit for Ministry of Education through COI, in association with Film Centre.

Director: Margaret Thompson. Producer: John Taylor. Associate Producer: Dorothy Grayson. Camera: A. E. Jeakins. Commentary: Bruce Belfrage, Distribution: Non-T. CFL. 40 mins. Intended audience: Training Colleges, etc.

In his book 'The First Five Years of Childhood' Arnold Gesell observes the behaviour and reactions of hundreds of children in given test cases under ideal laboratory conditions.

Interesting as this sort of thing may be to the amateur child-psychologist, it is too studied, too 'guinea-piggish' to be worthy of more than text-book notice of the teacher who is fully occupied in children in the concrete rather than the child in the abstract.

One of the March of Time issues was centred

round Dr Gesell's book and was a most interesting film for parents and teachers alike, but it was of passing academic interest and the very set-up of the one-way vision observation playroom divorced the children in the film from children in real life.

In the film Children Learning by Experience we are shown shots of children playing, working, doing things in natural surroundings. The episodes are unconnected except by a very tenuous thread of commentary, and the film differs from many other documentaries in that it sets out neither to teach nor to preach but only to illustrate to the student the kind of things which children do at different ages and to suggest that there may be causes for these actions and that it is up to the intending teacher to study these actions. In effect the film says 'Children are different from adults. If you are going to teach them you must try to discover how their minds tick over. Here we show you some of the things they can do or are likely to do at certain ages. Remember that this is only the average child (if there is such a being) and start your discussions from there.

As material for the training college, it is very useful. Many trainees enter the colleges with very small first hand experience of the habits of children—this film, if seen not once but many times, will raise many problems in their minds and will set them thinking about vital aspects of the child mind which would not otherwise occur to them.

The film is divided into two parts, the tirst entitled 'All children want to learn', and the second 'Children learn through activity and experience'. The second section is subdivided into (1) practising simple skills, (2) understanding the world around, (3) learning at second-hand, (4) learning through play and imagination.

Any film about children and with good pictures of children has an initial advantage over any other film. This one is not about children in the accepted sense but the photography alone would set the cinema audience ooh-ing and dah- ag

Some experts may not be so enthusiastic about its value, but some will consider it the most enterprising thing the Ministry of Education has yet done. One thing is certain—all those engaged in

(Continued on page 21)

reading for the month

#### NEW BOOKS ON FILM

Sound and The Documentary Film: Ken Cameron. With a foreword by Calvalcanti. (*Pitman.*) 15s. 0d.

For all the literature on films, there are still very few books on how they are made, other than specialized textbooks. Though the documentary movement has been particularly prolific in publication, till now directors, cameramen, cutters, and soundmen do not seem to have thought it worth while to describe their work in detail. One might suppose films grow on bushes, or are dropped down chimneys by storks for all the public attention their makers give to the creative processes of making them. For this reason alone, Mr Cameron's book is particularly welcome, and what he has to say is given weight by the fact that he is not only the best soundman in documentary today-his work includes both Listen to Britain and Instruments of the Orchestra but also one of the best soundmen in the British film industry.

The first part of his book, introduced by a foreword by Calvalcanti, who is both a little patronizing and a little bad tempered, deals in a clear workmanlike way with the use of sound in films, the functions of the sound-recordist and the difficulties peculiar to his particular branch of film production. It is always interesting to listen to an expert describing his work in simple terms, and in this case we hope that Mr Cameron will be heard also by those of his colleagues who

for some of whom the sound track is still only an irritating accessory. He recognizes, too, that a recordist's work does not end at the mixing panel, but should embrace both laboratory work and reproduction.

The second part of his book is a simple technical account of the electrical mechanical and

make up the rest of a film production team, and

The second part of his book is a simple technical account of the electrical, mechanical and photographic principles of recording. The third part is a glossary of technical terms. There are many illustrations and line drawings.

Making the Movies, Jeanne Bendick. (Paul Elek Ltd.) 12s. 6d.

Here is yet another addition to the library of volumes which explain the production of a film from the script to the sneak preview to that presumably dwindling number of people who do not know. The book is illustrated by the author with a large number of somewhat childish drawings of equipment and processes of the film world, but while it contains a fair amount of accuracy of description, everything is treated with such ingenuousness that one seriously wonders whether it is intended for purely adolescent consumption. Although no printed reference appears to its possible American origin, nevertheless the terms used, and indeed the spelling of many of them have a distinctly Transatlantic flavour. It is scarcely fair to grumble at a work which does so little harm, but it seems a great pity that paper and time and money should be wasted in printing a book which attempts so much and yet achieves so little.

Film, a Reader's Guide. Roger Manvell. (Cambridge University Press.) 1s.

This essay and bibliography form part of a series issued by the National Book League. Manvell's introduction is a short but precise account of the main points one should pay attention to if one is interested in the cinema. The list of books should provide a useful guide for the new reader. Unfortunately, many of them are out of print, though they can be found in libraries. Also there are a number of important books not available here in translation which have had to be omitted. Aspiring translators and publishers please note.

Freedom of the Movies. Ruth Inglis. (University of Chicago Press—agents, Cambridge University Press.)

It seems a pity that writing was invented so long ago. We can only vaguely imagine the effect of the dawning power to transmit knowledge in permanent form from one person to another. But we can see this power as vital to the first great 'cultural revolution'. The invention which foments our second 'cultural revolution'—photography, however, is still very much with us. With motion, colour, and sound added, we get the film.

Seen by most to be one of the greatest social forces of our time, photography is becoming generally known as a new way of speaking to one another, as a way of using machines to help us think and talk more deeply. (Sometimes, of course, it just helps us talk more.) Yet a second

truth is no less important; film is a form of expression which only groups of people can use.

Even the simple black and white snapshot can only be made after camera and photo-film makers have co-operated; and the subject has to co-operate before the trigger can be pressed. Club facilities (such as darkroom and enlarging apparatus) are commonly used even by the amateur. Thus photography is a group activity. And film making is a group activity-with a minimum group size, apparently of the order of a million or so people. (A community below this size—like Andorra or Luxembourg—seems too small to have a film industry of its own.) Because film making is this kind of group activity, freedom, in the commonly accepted individualistic sense of the word, is one of the things it is conspicuous for not having; the conception 'Freedom of the Movies' is thus in an important sense a contradiction in terms, and the book which Ruth Inglis, of the American Commission on Freedom of the Press has written, sets us pretty clearly on the path to that conclusion, without itself stating it very clearly.

'Freedom of the Movies' is largely an account of the censorship of films as it has grown up in the United States. Two things may come new to many; firstly, censorship both in America and Britain is a procedure imposed by the film industry itself. 'The economic necessity of mass audiences has made the industry eager to please everyone', and profits cannot be risked at the hands of unpredictable pressure groups. Secondly, the censorship boards seem to have no statutory authority. Any film, censored or no, may still be the subject of litigation on the grounds of slander, libel, obscenity, sedition, or similar. The Commission on Freedom of the Press sets out six recommendations in a Statement. The first of these gives the flavour of the whole:

The constitutional guarantees of freedom of the Press should be recognized as including motion pictures. The growing importance of the documentary film gives fresh emphasis to the need.

This reviewer, irresponsibly perhaps, finds the unrelieved comprehensiveness of the 'sociological' style a strain. The only relief comes from that mood of levity induced by reading the Production Code itself, quoted in full in its present form.

But apart from this the book fails to satisfy because it does not recognize that there is wanted today a deeper, more complex conception of 'freedom' than served in earlier times. One does not demand that the sociologists should be inspired to provide this, but they must know we require it to come into existence.

#### film monthly review

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50 Old Brompton Road SW7

#### DFN COMPETITION No. 2

Many people grumble at the programmes dished up in the ordinary commercial cinema. Here is the opportunity to get rid of some of the pent-up venom.

Competitors are invited to write a letter of remonstrance to a cinema manager whose programmes are not to their taste. Letters should be limited to 200 words and entries should reach the Editor before March 1st.

The usual prizes of a guinea and half a guinea are offered and results will appear in the April

#### MORE NEW FILMS

(Cont. from page 19)

the training of teachers must see this film; whether they use it or not is up to them.

A TEACHER

National Film Board of Canada

La Poulette Grise: Norman McLaren. Fiddle-De-Dee: Norman McLaren.

Cadet Rouselle: Jim McKay and George Dunning.

When Norman McLaren was a member of the GPO Film Unit, way back in 1938, he made an experimental film, an animated colour film of the so-called 'cartoon' variety, called Love on the Wing. In what now seems a somewhat crude offering he broke new ground, and gave us something quite fresh and different. In La Poulette Grise he has developed and polished his art to such a remarkable degree that we really feel that we have something new in the cinema. When the little wooden loft doors which open his series of Chansons de Chez-Nous open, we are carried forward into a dreamlike world of fantasy and imagination that has an indescribable charm and beauty all its own. Not only is its technical fluency thrilling, but somehow or other McLaren achieves a weird stereoscopy that seems to take us right forward into the middle of the picture. He gains a depth and intimacy unsurpassed by all Disney's Multiplane cameras. And one visual effect is varied and transformed so skilfully and gracefully that we find ourselves looking at something else without quite knowing how and when the change took place. The plaintive quality of the French-Canadian folk song makes La Poulette Grise a wonderful companion to his earlier and gayer C'Est L'Aviron.

Fiddle-De-Dee is very different. Here McLaren has reverted to the style of colour rhythm origin-

ated by Len Lye in his never forgotten *Colour-box*, and subsequently rather indifferently copied by Disney in *Fantasia*. A gay little violin tune is accompanied by abstract colour patterns on the screen. It is all delightfully done, but as one of the Review Board remarked, somehow disappointment comes at the end because we are not urged to post early for Christmas.

Finally, Cadet Rouselle is much more orthodox. The quaint cartoon ligures delightfully illustrate the song, but it relies for its effect more upon the charm of the folk song than upon the originality of its technique.

All Eves on Britain. Data for COI.

Producer: Donald Alexander, Directed and Written: Bladon Peake. Associate Director: Mary Beales. Camera: W. Suschitzky and K. Kettlewell. Distribution: Theatrical and monthly release, COI, 10 mins.

In the 1930's a foreign writer, turning a piercing and cynical eye on Britain, remarked that, in addition to claiming to be the most modest people in the world, we also claimed that we held the lead in everything else. This film shows that nothing has changed in the intervening years, except perhaps that what used to be a tacit assumption of superiority has become exceedingly vocal, with a suspicion of an hysterical edge to it. One may perhaps ask whether all this whistling in the dark is really necessary.

In All Eyes on Britain we see foreigners of every creed and colour flocking to Britain to congratulate us on our achievements in as many fields as can be packed into ten minutes. With one voice but many accents they say to the audience 'You see, you do it so much better than anyone else.' The treatment that the makers have chosen for this theme is a fantastic one—

by Heltzapoppin out of Upturned Glass. Their object has doubtless been to avoid at all costs the pedestrian, unimaginative approach for which so many documentaries have been rightly criticized; but they have unfortunately not always remembered the cardinal rule that the audience must be able to follow what is going on. The beginning of the film particularly is exasperatingly confusing, less on account of the conception than of the presentation.

The Government's purpose in sponsoring this Monthly Release is presumably to bolster what it imagines to be the sagging confidence of the people; but what the effect will be is another matter. There are many reasons for thinking that films of this kind encourage the inert complacency which is one of the Englishman's most besetting vices. Perhaps the Government will now consider sponsoring a film showing foreigners flocking to this country to complain with un-British bluntness about the shoddiness of some of our exports and the inefficiency of some of our institutions. It might have to be more than a one-reeler.

The Young Housewife, Anglo-Scottish for Scottish Education Department and Ministry of Education through COI. 10 mins.

This film is about the education of teen-age girls in the domestic sciences. It shows how, at a particular Scottish school, the pupils learn to plan the housewife's day, and to carry out various homely tasks in a way which will forestall the criticisms of their future husbands. The film is not ambitious, but it is made with skill and has something of the simple and tidy adequacy of a kitchen table. Here and there, there are neat touches of characterization and humour, and the girl who plays the principal part does so without fumbling. To say that there is nothing outstanding about the direction and camerawork is no more than saying that they have no noticeable faults.

#### THE BRITISH FILM ACADEMY

THE BRITISH FILM ACADEMY is a new organization founded by the film-makers of Great Britain. It was first formed as the result of a conference held in the autumn of 1946, to which a large number of distinguished film-makers were invited. At this meeting a Committee was elected to prepare the Academy's constitution and policy and arrange for its formal registration as a non-profit-making company. The Chairman of this Committee was David Lean: the remaining members were the Hon Anthony Asquith, Michael Balcon, Sidney Cole, Thorold Dickinson, Sir Alexander Korda, Frank Launder, Ronald Neame, Michael Powell, Carol Reed, Paul Rotha and Harry Watt. In August, 1947, Dr Roger Manvell was invited to become the first Secretary-General of the Academy, and began his work in October, when the first official General Meeting of the members of the Academy was called. Nearly a hundred filmmakers were present at this meeting; the Constitution of the Academy was ratified, and its aims can now therefore, be outlined.

The introduction to the Academy's Constitution read as follows:

The British Film Academy is an organization founded by the creative film-makers in the United Kingdom for the advancement of the art and technique of the film.

The aim of the Academy is to stimulate ex-

ceptional creative work and to encourage experiment and research in all branches of the industry.

The Academy will co-operate with organizations in this country and abroad which advocate similar ideals of international understanding and favour the development of the arts.

The Academy will start at once to build up a library of British film records, books, scripts, designs, musical scores, photographs and other material of importance. When this collection has assumed suitable proportions, the Academy hopes to promote or advise on the publication of books on the film, exhibitions of British film designs and photography and concerts of British film music. It will also encourage and assist in the compilation of world film statistics and information. The work of organizing the Academy's records and statistics is being undertaken by Miss Rachel Low, who joined the staff as Librarian and Statistician in December.

In the branch of public relations the Academy will act as an organization representing the views of the creative film-makers in the United Kingdom. It will establish contact with all groups concerned with the artistic and technical advancement of the film in the United Kingdom, the British Commonwealth of Nations and all other countries. It will also co-operate with educational

organizations for the better appreciation and understanding of the cinema, and will encourage the foundation of university departments of film studies. It will encourage and possibly at a later stage, promote research and experimental work. It will make awards of merit for outstanding artistic, technical and scientific achievements. Finally the Academy is prepared to assist in the organization of film festivals at home and abroad.

For its members the Academy will arrange lectures, debates and private viewings of films. It is obviously of the greatest importance that British film-makers should meet informally to discuss the development of their art among themselves and with distinguished colleagues from abroad; the Academy hopes to become a centre for these activities.

The alfairs of the Academy will be supervised by a Council elected from among the members. Membership itself is divided into two categories; people rendering outstanding service to the cinema may be nominated by Academy members, either as Honorary Members or as Members. Honorary Membership will normally be reserved for distinguished film veterans, production executives and notable film-makers overseas general membership is open to film-makers workin on production in British studios or on pro essional research in connection with the film.

#### Newcastle experiment

#### Children's Cinema by D. George Bennell

IT is frequently said that the noticeable lack of discipline in children's matinées on Saturday mornings cannot be improved without imposing such a strict 'class-room' atmosphere as would spoil the children's enjoyment.

This is one of the statements that can be disproved by a visit to the experimental Cinema Club organized by the Northern Counties Children's Cinema Council at Newcastle-on-Tyne.

There, soon after 9.30 the children began to arrive at the lecture hall above the News Theatre on Pilgrim Street. Two youngsters were giving out questionnaire forms, coloured for ease of analysis—pink for girls and blue for boys. Two or three grown-ups were giving out programmes and taking money from those children who have not paid at school. No ushers were needed: the children find their own seats, joining their friends in an easy, natural manner. There is no queueing, no pushing and no shouting either by the children or the attendants; the children have come for an outing and they enjoy their morning gossip before the show begins.

At about 10 o'clock lights went out, the film began and within a few seconds the voices of the children were hushed. This was a colour film, *The Nation's Wealth*; the print was somewhat dark and the light fluctuating but the children

expressed their appreciation at the end. Then came *The Beginnings of the Cinema*, a completely silent film showing examples of the early days of cinematography. It is important to note how interested the children were, even in an old, silent film.

The next film was a coloured cartoon and the children hailed the title with expressions of delight; but at the end they gave it much the same applause as they had given to the other films. Canadian Landscape, a beautiful colour film showing the work of the painter, A. Y. Jackson, completed the first half of the programme.

When the lights went up for the interval, Mr Tunnah, the Club Director, climbed on to the platform and asked the children to fill up the questionnaire form. 'Do not try to put down what will please us,' he said. 'Put down just what you think. If you like the film very much, put a cross underneath "Yes"; if you do not like it, put a cross underneath "No"; if you think it is quite nice but not very good, just leave it blank. Now with regard to the next programme: we are hoping to make it a double number, that is, eight pages instead of four. But we shall need your help and I should like you to send in as many lino-cuts and poems as you can. The competition this month is to write a ghost story or play so will you do your best to send in entries.

I'm always thinking up new camera angles,

So, all in all, my treatment by the Unit

I handed in an outline on Neurosis,

To say the very least was somewhat hard.

At a meeting I said Korda was a Curse;

I wrote a script on Dysentery in Miners

A subject which I've given all I've got-

Are waiting in my brief-case to be shot.

With a commentary in very pregnant verse.

A five-reeler on the drains of Wolverhampton—

And a feature on the Textile Workers' Birth-Rate

I'm more 'Avant' than the keenest 'Avant Garde'

'The next item is Christmas Cards. The committee have been thinking of making Christmas Cards for members and we want to know how many of you would like one.' (About three-quarters of the children put their hands up). 'Then we also thought of having a Christmas party; I am afraid the refreshments will be very small, only tea and a bun, but how many would like to come?' (Almost all the children were thrilled at the prospect.)

In the second half of the programme the children saw *The Swan*, a nature film of the swannery at Abbotsford; *Safety First*, a silent film of Harold Lloyd; and *Wild Elephant Round Up*, a thrilling sound film which showed the capture of wild elephants in Africa.

Thus, another of the popular statements had been disproved. The Cinema Council have shown that it is possible to give children a series of interesting, entertaining and even broadly educational programmes without recourse to second- or third-rate features or shorts. Sometimes the programme consists of a number of short films and sometimes of only two larger films. But the result is the same: the children thoroughly enjoy their own film shows.

A third important matter is the fostering of a real club spirit. Some appreciation of this has already been given and further evidence of it is afforded by the children's behaviour at the end of the show. When they go home, there is no helterskelter down the stairs, for many of them stay to chat with each other and with the grown-ups. It was, in fact, this need for time for conversation that prompted the Committee to separate the two shows which last year were given consecutively, but which this year are arranged one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

During the week the Committee meets. This is composed largely of children and they make the real decisions. It is for their benefit that Mr Tunnah has asked for the numbers of children who wish to attend the party or who want Christmas Cards. Upon that response the Committee can decide whether it is worth while printing cards and holding the party.

The work of the Northern Counties Children's Cinema Council during last winter is explained in the report which they have published (price 1s. 1d. post free from Mr F. R. Griffin, 138 Holystone Crescent, Newcastle-on-Tyne).

The number of children, 250 at a time, is easy to handle. It could possible be increased to 350 if the room were larger, but this figure is probably the maximum that could be treated as a collection of individuals instead of as a massed audience.

Of course, the Club has the great advantage that membership is a privilege; the numbers could easily be doubled if facilities were available. The important result of limiting the membership however, is that the general atmosphere is one of confidence and real enjoyment, reflecting the spirit of a genuine Club with all the members working together for the common good. It provides an example for the rest of the country, but in order to succeed as it has in Newcastle it needs the whole-hearted co-operation of the teaching profession.

#### THE FINAL STRAW

I hardly ever shave or have my hair cut, I slop about in dirty corduroys; On Friday nights you'll find me at 'The Pillars' Commingling with the Documentary Boys.

I've never missed an article by Grierson, I think I know Pudovkin off by heart; I've lent a cigarette to Arthur Elton—You'd think, to say the least, I'd made a start.

I've shouted out that Rank is Britain's Danger, The Daily Worker's with me day and night; I've shared the lift with Anstey at the Gargoyle, And once I changed a wheel for Basil Wright.

I might have made an epic on Diphtheria,
Or a Poem on the Trend of Workers' Flats . . .
So I leave you to imagine what I told them
When they handed me a trailer . . me! . on RATS.
G. B.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

Death of British Documentary?

DEAR SIR: The sensitive observer had no need to wait the verdict of the Brussels Film Festival to earn that the young genius of British documenary had died a premature death. Of course the accuse is that there has been a war: but the war has not reduced the number of these films, rather otherwise. It is not quantity that has died, but quality.

Films are appearing in greater numbers and vith greater technical proficiency, but—and here s the disturbing thought—with a depressing lack fine profit in a depression and the profit in the second s

of inspiration and character.

Documentary had small beginnings, noninitiative and infinitesimal technical acilities. To start on a film one required vast inthusiasm and tremendous belief in the worthwhileness of the subject to be filmed. The world was full (and still is) of subjects strong enough to nspire this enthusiasm, and here was a comaratively new medium with which to bring real hings to the social consciousness of multitudes of the people.

Subjects were chosen; they saw the light as rough drafts. The enthusiasts talked to many people and in strange places; some thought they were mad. Little by little the jewels of truth emerged from the dross. The rough draft in the hands of the prime mover (who was usually the lirector and cameraman rolled into one) became a little less rough and took shape, the film became alive, not always on paper, but sometimes crystallized in the mind of the director—not in terms of trolley shots, mixes, zooms and such ike, but of hot facts, intimate disturbing realities of existence of which humanity is made up and which could be captured by the camera.

Now to express this belief in its chosen medium. Where can a camera be begged or borrowed? Who will give or lend some money?—not with which to pay high salaries, but just to buy film stock, for the early workers were more interested in their subject than in a rising bank balance. These were the real difficulties which had to be overcome before a start could be made.

Gradually the shape on paper and in the mind became the shape on film. Work was often physically hard because one was not in those days surrounded by a band of skilled assistants. Often it was exasperating. The camera, a borrowed one and not so good after all, was often temperamental. But finally the desired effect was obtained never of course so good as was intended; but in time—and sometimes it was not so long—the finished picture emerged; technically it was usually bad, sometimes shocking, but gleaming through the technical deficiencies there shone the light of truth and sincerity.

On such slender foundations as these was built the fame of British documentary.

Let us consider now the conditions which exist today, out of which has grown the disease and demise of British documentary quality.

Films of documentary class are not now produced by impecunious but enthusiastic free-lances, but by production companies some of which, to their credit let it be said, are not primarily concerned with making large profits. A sponsoring body commissions a film to be

made on a given subject, and a director is briefed to make an investigation and write a treatment which, under the producer's eye, conforms to the policy and tradition of the production company.

The treatment is now passed on to the sponsor, who will appoint a committee to consider the work. More often than not the members of this committee, though experts on the subjects of the film, know nothing at all about film construction or the impact of the filmic medium on the mind of an audience.

The committee proceed to analyse and disintegrate the treatment, so carefully built up by the director who knows the possibilities and limitations of the screen—each member advances and insists on his own particular point of view.

Sometimes there are several separate committees to be placated. The writer knows of one case where five committees scattered up and down the country all had to have their say, and this number may not be a record. The result could only be confusion worse confounded.

Treatments produced under these conditions are, at their best, composite affairs, and a director who starts on his shooting script with this background, and from this confusion of ideas and tries to rescue a crystal fine of filmic thought has a heart-rending job on hand.

When the committee of non-filmic experts (who have by this time become filmically self-important) demand to see the shooting script then the battles have to be fought all over again.

By this time any original enthusiasm, which the director once had for his subject has long since evaporated and when the picture at long last attains completion, producer, director and unit have indeed been clever if they have combined most of the ideas of the committee and succeeded in preserving a semblance of sanity in its presentation.

Under these conditions a director with great potentialities may produce very indifferent films. Having been diverted from his true creative sphere he attempts to make up for the deficiencies of his script, of which he is only too conscious, by resorting to every technical trick he can bring in to rescue the film from dullness.

Documentaries have thus lost their original art of presenting truth by the power of simple sincerity and are becoming merely clever.

Where lies the light? If there must be committees and it seems there must, let them contribute to the film (instead of destroying it) by collecting and collating all the facts relative to the subject, and in their relative importance, before ever the treatment is started on, for which work they are probably well qualified, then leave the architecture of the picture entirely in the hands of the producing company, who surely are the most competent people to deal with it.

Yours truly,

RONALD GARDINER

Realist Film Unit 9 G1 Chapel S1, London, W1

Scrapbook for 1922

DEAR SIR: I have always felt the past policy of anonymous reviews in the *DNL* to be open to many objections, and am glad to see that recently these objections have been met in some measure by herding all the newer members of the editorial board into a reviewing pen. Even so, it seems that, while avoiding the possibility of the unbalanced

individual anonymous review, *DFN* has merely opened the doors to an unbalanced collective one. I refer to the review, in the January issue, of *Scrapbook Jor* 1922, which is grudgingly accorded just under two hundred lukewarm words, while another theatrical short, *Montreal by Night*, of no significance, gets almost double the space in the same issue.

I have seen Scrapbook for 1922 in the cinema, and in private, and have been struck not only by the way it grips its audience throughout its length, but also by the force of the perspective it gives to our present-day lives and problems. Looking back twenty-five years, to a time when another generation was wistfully regarding a mythical 'golden age', shows up our own glances over our shoulders today as the unrealistic indulgences they are. That implication in the film is unmistakable: and I can think of few more apposite or needful exhortations of the moment than that we should face forward to the future and not lean backwards to the past. The pity is that the film was not made a year earlier.

Admittedly, the film frankly shows more than a little interest in the 'box-office', but I submit that the very positive message it contains should not have escaped fourteen alert eyes and ears. Peter Baylis and his team are surely to be congratulated on having conceived, and so deftly made, a film which is likely to provoke constructive thought in its audiences at the same time as being a rattling good piece of entertainment.

Yours truly,

HUGH MENTARRI, MD

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#### CORRESPONDENCE (contd.)

The Nadir Films Controversy Two more letters:

#### from Hector Bathos

DEAR SIR: As Mr Phillip Mackie, in his article 'Production History of a COI Film', mentions me perhaps you will permit me to make purely personal comments—much as I normally deplore unilateral action of any kind.

Mr Mackie is not quite correct in saying I was 'free to direct the film'. At that time *Pipette Suction* had reached a crucial stage (the start of the third year of writing), and I did not then know that *Blancho Application Teclnique*, which had only been recorded unsuccessfully with four different commentators, would be accepted as spoken by Graham Suave. Therefore, though not physically busy, I had a full and worried mind, and as a result never achieved a firm grasp of *Exteriosis*—did not even catch it.

Mr Mackie suppresses the fact that the briefing was attended by only nine people, of whom a mere six were subject experts. My heart sank, that afternoon, because I realized that really protracted disagreements, such as we were enjoying with *Pipette Suction*, would not be possible among so few consultants. I should not have nearly enough time to ponder deeply.

Though it may be tactless to refer again to Pipette Suction, which was not a COI film, I do think that the procedure adopted during its production (though far short of ideal) should be set against that of Exteriosis. We had a committee of sixty, from which we formed five sub-committees, each of ten members; one sub-committee for research, one to supervise the writing, one to supervise the shooting, one to view the rushes and one to superintend the editing. (As our cutting room is small, the latter sub-committee had to be sub-divided, working alternate shifts; but all members always debated every cut, mix and choice of shot.) I shall never forget my elation when the eighth re-take of shot ninety-two was chosen and I was able to appreciate that, just as no single word of the script had been written by myself, so had no single shot in the film been directed or edited as (unaided) I should have done it.

This was not the case with *Exteriosis*: there was too much of 'me' in it (about three per cent alas). But the fault arose out of the decision (which I opposed) to hurtle from investigation to show copy in two years, and the paucity of advisors of all kinds.

Let us sit together around tables larger and

ever larger, in rooms bigger and ever bigger, talking more and ever more until our fine ideal is at last achieved; until the writing of a film becomes a lifework. Then cameras, lights, studios—even film stock itself—will be no longer necessary, and the heavy expenses which shortsighted production managers would have us merely reduce, will become totally unnecessary.

Yours faithfully,

HECTOR BATHOS Nadir Films

#### and from Phillip Mackie

sir: I was glad to see Nero Nonflam's letter about the Nadir film, A Stitch In Time. Nero is an old friend of mine—many a time, in the bar at the French Club, we have wagged our heads over Aims and Achievements—and he will not mind a couple of footnotes from me.

Nero is distressed by the absence of any reference to the producer. Of course, the producer was around the place most of the time, except for a Festival here and a lightning trip there. But I tried to keep my history as simple as possible, and if I'd brought in the producer I should have had to explain that complicated and tedious business about how Hector didn't get on with Teddy, and Clarence couldn't work with Pauline. Nero wouldn't have liked me to rake all that over again.

Nero has been misled by my words, 'Bathos and the PCO have a drink together'. 'A drink' is, of course, a collective term: a number of drinks. Hector and I paid alternately, and for my part I only wish I had an expense account.

I don't want to go over the budget business again; it's already cost me a week of my life and a packet of aspirins. May I just say that we asked for a simple straightforward £4,000 job, and it was really a little naughty of Nadir to write in that crowd scene at Runnymede that bumped up the final cost to £6,340. It was a good scene, though, and I for one was sorry that Hector took it out at rough-cut stage.

As for the factory shows, I do wish Nero had been able to go to one or two with me. It was really most encouraging to hear the expressions of surprise and delight at seeing an amusing documentary film.

Finally, may I wish the producer the best of luck in the feature world? There, I am sure, he will never have a project canned, a script revised or a budget cut; and his creative abilities will find the complete freedom that they deserve.

Yours, etc.,

PHILIP MACKIE,

Films Division

#### Hans Andersen

sir: In these latter days the fragments of the distorting mirror broken by the demon in the imagination of Hans Andersen have obviously become widely dispersed among film makers. In consequence the public are daily tormented with cleverness, cynicism, bitterness and distortion, while it longs for beauty, truth, humour and tolerance. There has been a noticeable defection of little Kays from their little Gerdas in the film world.

Would it were possible for some publicspirited individual to form a 'league of Little Gerdas'.

Alternatively, could not the managers of cinemas arrange for us to put our feet up?

Yours sincerely,

PATRICK BLACK

#### String of Beads

sir: Your Reviewing Panel state, in their notice of this Company's *String of Beads* in your January issue, that no theatrical distribution could be obtained. I am glad to say that this situation has altered and that the film will now be distributed in this country by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Yours faithfully,

PAUL FLETCHER

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the chemist? No other form of entertainment owes him so heavy a debt. Celluloid itself, the basis of the industry, is a chemical achievement. This must be transparent to give clear images after great magnification, resilient and tough to stand great strain. It must be so treated that the danger from fire is reduced to a minimum. The hand of the chemist is indeed traceable from the make-up of the actors to the lamps in the projectors. In the apparatus used for the sound-recording rare metals are needed: in the lenses of cameras and projectors, optical glass of the highest quality: in the colour-photography, pigments of the truest and most vivid colour. The sets for the ballrooms and palaces of the cinema's Cloudcuckoodom involve the use of large

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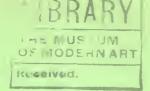
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#### MARCH MERRYWEATHER

THE FILMS BILL has proceeded in unspectacular fashion through the machinery of the House. In the Committee Stage members went solemnly through a tray full of amendments, showing in many cases a surprising grasp of the complex details of the industry. Most of the questions of substance they raised were, however, carefully headed off by an adroit move on the part of the President of the Board of Trade. When pressed to accept amendments designed to improve the marketing prospects for British films, he referred questioners to his proposed Committee of Inquiry into distribution and exhibition. There the matter was left to rest.

The outstanding aspect of the Bill so far has been the low temperature of the discussion both in the House and outside. Few heated exchanges have taken place on the floor, and there has been singularly little comment in the national Press. Those who remember the Bacon-Bogart diatribes of last year and more particularly the vast telegram campaigns organized by exhibitors at the time of the 1938 Act, expected much more flame than smoke.

In part the unsolved issue of the Import Tax must be held responsible for this tepid reception. Also it would seem one of those odd quirks of public interest which veers and changes with strange suddenness. At least the business of framing new legislation should have been much easier in consequence. But is the resulting Bill likely to be any more effective than the old Act?

The Bill, when first presented, was called by some unambitious and timid. What has happened in Committee Stage has not altered that impression. The President of the Board of Trade has had second thoughts about one or two points but none of them are major issues.

To give British producers protection against the overwhelming volume of American film imports is necessary, but by itself, not enough. Anyway at this very moment, when no American films are coming into the country, it is like building a rampart to keep out the sky. It is argued that protection is the sole purpose of these Films Bills and that it would be improper to extend their scope. But in fact the new Bill does touch on fresh issues affecting the wider operations of the industry. It legalizes the gentleman's agreement given by the three circuits several years ago to limit their further expansion. It incorporates the Board set up in October 1946 to select six independent feature films a year for circuit distribution. In other words, it admits that more is needed than mere protection against foreign imports. The chief criticism is that it does so little more, just at the time when prompt and effective action is needed to get British filmmaking out of its present crisis with studios idle and technicians unemployed. More and regular finance for production is one of the industry's main needs. A Government film finance corporation has been mooted for years: rumours are in the air once again, but are they to be taken seriously? The Report on Monopoly Tendencies in the industry showed that the whole distribution and exhibition side needs prompt attention and itself made a number of valuable recommendations. But that was over three years ago.

The new President of the Board of Trade has already shown a very considerable grasp of the film industry's thornier problems. But will he be able to break with the traditionally timid policies of his permanent officials? At the moment it happens that there is nothing for the Bill to protect British producers against. It would be more than ironical if the next move found the Government with

nothing to protect.

#### NOTES OF THE MONTH

#### John Grierson

FOLLOWERS OF the documentary film will find a special logic in John Grierson's return to England at this time to oversee Government film-making. Britain's key position today in the world of economics and politics provides crucial tasks for the informational film-maker. Both in North America and later with UNESCO, John Grierson has during the past nine years made a signal contribution to the use and the development of the factual film. He returns to London to find in existence many of those things for which he pioneered in the early days of documentary—Government filmmaking centralized under a single agency, the State in possession of its own Film Unit. Yet few will claim that Government films are at present either fully effective as propaganda or even half satisfying as art. It is safe to assume that John Grierson will achieve lively improvement in both directions. And our guess is that he will begin by suggesting that instead of sitting in the dining-room and complaining about the food, the cooks should take off their coats and get to work in the kitchen.

#### Academic Honour

THE documentary film movement has not been openly honoured in the academic field during its brief—but not all that brief existence. We shall all, therefore, find an exceptional warmth of appreciation in the so well-merited honour done to John Grierson of the University of Glasgow, which has now invested him with an LL.D. In this action the University of Glasgow is doing much more than honouring one of its more electrifying alumni, it is in fact, honouring on a national and international scale, the untiring efforts of an exceptionally gifted and hard-working individual on behalf of a new, lively and constructive approach to civic education throughout the world. The only wonder is that the honour should be single and so belated. Certain other Universities—and not only in the British Isles—might ponder the implications.

#### The Cultural Needs of our People

ON February 19th while the Lords continued somewhat academically to debate the new Films Bill, the Commons passed an amendment to the Local Government Bill giving local authorities wide powers to provide entertainment of all kinds. For the first time they can set up theatres and run exhibitions and concerts and also their own cinemas and film shows. They can even provide their own bars! The revival of interest in the arts during the war showed how narrow had been the choice of entertainment provided commercially. Wise and imaginative use of their new powers by local authorities can spread enormously the cultural opportunities available in all parts of the country. This need is as great in films as it is in the other arts.

#### Religion and Films

THE first films to be made officially by the Church of England were shown privately on February 9th in London. They have been financed by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. The first, entitled The Coming of the Light was produced by the Rev G. L. Wheeler in consultation with the Production Committee of the Church of England Films Commission (which is being superseded by the new advisory Church of England Film Council with SPCK as its Executive Agency). The second film, entitled Your Inheritance, was produced under the direct supervision of the Production Committee of the Commission.

Both films are primarily instructional and are designed to be used in conjunction with other modes of teaching, whether in hall or in church.

The Coming of the Light is intended to be used in connection with lectures and classes, for Youth or Further Study (Adult) purposes. It employs topographical and diagrammatical sequences to illustrate the history of the Church of England, from the earliest times down to the sixth century. It is planned as the first in a series of historical instructional films.

Your Inheritance is primarily intended for adult churchgoers. It is meant to bring before them visually what the Church can mean to them, and that the Church's life is in its members and not in its stones.

It is hoped that the *DFN* Review Board will be able to see these films in the near future.

#### **Shorts**

Edinburgh this year hopes to beat last year's record. The Festival of Documentary Films is to last three weeks-roughly from August 22nd to September 7th. We hope to keep readers advised as to the plans for the Festival.

We hear from Evans Medical Supplies that their pharmaceutical film Take Thou has proved so popular that additional copies have had to go into the Central Film Library.

Numbers 4, 5 and 6 of This Modern Age Series are now available for the use of film societies on 16 mm. These three films are entitled Fabrics of the Future, Thoroughbreds for the World, and Palestine. They may be hired from GB Film Library and our reviews of them will be found in DNL, Vol. 6, No. 56.

John Curthoys' PRODUCTIONS and Unicorn Head have moved to new and larger premises at 177 The Vale, Acton, London, W3.

Sub-standard exhibitors have formed a 16 mm Film Exhibitors Guild with a temporary address at Whitehall Cine Service, 116 Whitehall Road, Bristol, 5. There is, apparently, some possibility that the CEA will not recognize such an organization.

James Madill of Glasgow has won first prize in the recent Central Office of Information script writing competition—John Harper Nelson of London came second. Over 500 scripts were sent in from all parts of the world.

Congratulations to COI for taking advantage of a week when there were no new feature films for the Critics Circle to see. They quickly organized a show of documentaries instead and invited all the critics. Couldn't this be a regular practice?

Germany 1947

## Summer in Peine

Graham Wallace

PEINE IS a small country town lying between Hanover and Brunswick in the British Zone of Germany. The town and the surrounding district or Kreis had been selected as the location for a short documentary on Germany today. The film dealt with the work of an English civilian officer working in the Control Commission for Germany—the Kreis Resident Officer. It was a monthly release for the COI and was intended to show something of the work of an individual in the CCG and of life and conditions in Germany.

Life in Peine is typical, on a small scale, of life all over Germany. Here we find all the problems of the Black Market, shortages of clothing and food, overcrowded accommodation, idle factories and refugees that were the concern of the central character of our film—the Kreis Resident Officer.

The production unit making the film was a mixed one, with English and German technicians working together. The director and unit manager came from the Crown Film Unit; the cameraman, his assistant, editor, electricians, production manager, script girl and sound technicians came from the Junge Film-Union of Hamburg. Our film was a joint production of these two units.

It was late in August when we arrived in Peine to start shooting our film. It was something of an experiment for a mixed crew of English and German technicians to work together on a film. We did not know how it would turn out. At first we were stiff and strange towards each other, living together in a German hotel, with the language barrier preventing mutual understanding. After a few days, when the barrier of nationality had been dropped, we became a team of technicians working together

to make a film, conversing in a mixture of bad English and guide-book German, with the exception of the cameraman who claimed to speak five languages fluently and certainly had good English.

The concept of a straightforward factual documentary film dealing with real people and their daily work was foreign to the German technicians, Their Dokumentarfilm and Kulturfilm production consisted for the main part of excellent instructional films or pretty studies of 'Spring in an Alpine Valley' and other wellworn themes. To take a camera and lights into a small hall packed with truculent refugees from the East was a new experience for the German technicians. They had to be convinced that it was not necessary to engage an actor for every part in the script. Once our technique was understood, they willingly fell in with the straightforward presentation of our theme, without undue elaboration.

Shooting a film in Germany is very much harder than working under the most trying conditions in England. There is an almost total shortage of film-making material and equipment and there is the personal problem. The first thought of every German technician is food. Like everyone else in Germany, they are strictly rationed on a low level, though they are entitled to draw heavy workers' rations. Even these, by English standards, are meagre indeed. Of course the English members of the unit were able to help out with part of their rations. By our present-day standards German technicians are poorly paid, but their wages are settled by the German administration. Much of their salary went to buying extra food, Transport is difficult for Germans. We had to wait five or six days before the camera assistant and Graham Wallace is Director of 'KRO Germany 1947', a joint production of Crown Film Unit and Junge Film-Union, Hamburg. The film was issued as a monthly release for January, 1948, and is reviewed on page 31.

electrician could get a permit to leave Berlin and travel on the interzonal train to join the unit in Peine. Local transport in the way of a car or lorry was almost unobtainable; at one time we transported our lights through the streets of Peine on a horse-drawn cart!

We had brought with us as much as possible from England. All our stock, both negative and positive, bulbs for the lamps and all the oddments like camera tape, empty tins, chalk, black paper and Windowlite—all unobtainable in Germany.

Our worst headache proved to be the processing of our film. We had decided to have it processed out in Germany rather than go to the trouble of flying it back to England and then sending it back to Germany for viewing and editing. Our experience showed that this would have been the easiest and quickest course to follow. There are several laboratories working in the British Zone, but they are small and improvised establishments, possessing only one machine for developing and printing. They are subject to frequent current cuts and cannot work for days at a time, until there is a guarantee of current being available for long enough to run a roll of film through the bath, During our twenty days of shooting we had only seen one small batch of rushes, though we had been promised a five-day delivery period. After the shooting was finished we found all our material lying untouched in the laboratory, with many excuses for the delay in processing. In desperation we sent it all to a laboratory in Berlin and were able to view our rushes a week after the completion of shooting!

When shooting interiors we ran our lamps off the local electricity supply. This was never constant for more than a few consecutive minutes. All the members of the unit had to stand by the lamps ready to move them forwards or backwards with the voltage fluctuations. The cameraman could never put his light meter down for a minute, but had to be continually checking and rechecking the light so that we could have it constant for long enough to do a 'take'.

From the people of Peine we had many varied reactions to our shooting in their town. In general they were helpful and generous with their time, but there were exceptions. There was the Burgomeister of the town. At first he willingly consented to appear in the film. Later on, when required for some retakes, he was most reluctant to appear. Apparently he had been accused by his colleagues on the Council of undue 'collaboration' with the English and he was fearful for his re-election at the forthcoming municipal elections. Then there were the refugees in a school hall; three hundred of them living together in cramped quarters. sleeping on straw on the floor. They regarded our operations as a put-up propaganda job by the English and demanded to know what we are going to do about sending them back home or giving them proper accommodation.

Again and again we received great help and



This still from KRO Germany 1947 is reproduced from COI's Monthly Review of January by permission of the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office

(Continued foot column 1 page 29)



#### To the Seven-Headed Board of Review of DFN

sirs: When you set up that Reviewing Panel, I had my doubts as to how you would fare if some of your less composite selves got the gang into a judgment that was seriously challenged. This, so to speak, is it. If you tell me your composite self has no body to be burned, and no soul to be damned, you had better listen a moment, for I am going to have a shot at both.

I am concerned, if you please, with the page of criticisms on recent Canadian films in your January issue. I am concerned for two reasons. The first is that I was once associated with the National Film Board in a local, more or less Red Indian capacity, and have a regard for the people who work there, and I could not believe on the face of it that they were as bad as you compositely, or uncompositely, said they were. The second reason is that I went to see four of the seven films you reviewed and now say quite simply, for what it is worth, that your criticism was thoughtless, and from any serious point of view, either in documentary leadership or documentary criticism, inadequate.

Here is a group of films all coming from a not unnotable unit. There are people like McLean, Beveridge, Jackson, Blackburn, Applebaum, Weisenborn, Budge Crawley, not to mention Stuart Legg, around, and they are all pretty good people with a good sense of documentary and, shall we say, a certain measure of taste, and yet DFN cannot find a good word to say for any one of seven of their films. This one Broncho Busters is 'just a programme filler', Tomorrow's Citizens 'purports to examine' this and that and 'suffers from severe indigestion' and is 'slick, shallow and smug' (just hark at them, Stuart!), and 'does not succeed'. Another one 'falls from the frying pan of dullness into the fire of obscurity'. Montreal by Night is yet another 'programme filler'. Condition Improved, which is about occupational therapy, save the mark, was no great good because 'it may be questioned whether such a survey which consists essentially of linked examples is really the most convincing approach to the subject'.

For good measure, there is a certain sniffing at the NFB information sheets as though your august composite Panel was not concerned in reviewing the films but in reviewing the good old hooey which goes with publicity sheets the world over.

I have in my time kicked some films around, but I doubt if I ever was totally sore about seven in a row and when I see seven good men and true being sore about seven in a row I find it quite a phenomenon. I even doubt if it is possible, either in good criticism or good manners.

Good manners we shall leave aside, except to say that the Canadian boys can be articulate too, and it does nobody any good to be superior, and start a slanging match over each other's films which no one can win. Who, for example, is anyone in documentary to talk about a 'mere programme filler' when so many

of the damn things don't even manage to hit a theatre programme? Whatever their virtues or failings, the Canadian films referred to did manage to do just that.

As for good criticism, I would say, in general, that one element of it is to say what is good as well as what is bad and it is only the tyro who finds a warming virtue in the continuing negative. But let us take them one at a time remembering that, of the films mentioned, Tomorrow's Citizens and Montreal by Night were made for theatre showing and the ten-minute attention of a mass audience.

I see that Bronco Busters, in a snappy innuendo, is described as 'static' and only moves because it happens that there are some fast horses and dogies in and around. It is, moreover, a 'pretty ordinary piece of film-making which could have been made anywhere on the North American continent'. Here is one re-



viewer who says the picture is fast and that it is the best rodeo item, with more working detail, that has come along in a long while and that it will certainly excite the children everywhere. For my money, I would have liked to see more of the Royal Show aspect of the Calgary Stampede, with the big Herefords in from the foothills, but the atmosphere is good and ordinary Calgary and nowhere else I assure you, and not without a certain reference back to windbreaks and sundry other aspects of progressive farming which I thought moderately thoughtful on the part of somebody.

Maybe it is true that the local idiom in Canada is a trifle corny, but whose local idiom is not, if you follow my meaning? I'd say that here often is fast and sensitive camera-work and good reportage in anyone's language: of the boys from the farm showing their paces at a local agricultural show in the shadow of the Rockies. The film looks it and it is and does not pretend to do any more. When did I last see a film as good about the Bath Show?

Tomorrow's Citizens is another, more serious

matter altogether. The task was to produce a serious film editorial for theatres on a world subject: in ten-minute length. To my knowledge, it had never been done before and represented an experiment which was important for all of us. I have, myself, been so technically interested in the problem that I must have seen the film seven or eight times. Your review does not seem to be even conscious that in seeing a ten-minute theatre discussion of educational principle and ideology, it was seeing a very rare bird indeed, not to mention a very literate account of the ever-recurring gap between technological progress and educational substance.

There could be a deal of argument about the formula used. My own complaint is that the film proceeds too much by assertion and too little by easy illumination; but, I'm damned if I can see at this stage how a one-reel editorial form can do otherwise, any more than the shortened editorial forms of, say, the New York Daily News.

The tabloid shape tends to a propaganda shape and it is true that Tomorrow's Citizens hits you on the head and is done with it. But when your review talks of 'biting off more than it can chew' and being 'slick, shallow and smug' this, too, is proceeding by assertion and with a vengeance. In my view, it is not 'shallow' because it does in fact raise what has been one of the profoundest problems before education since Marx first posed it in the Poverty of Philosophy a hundred years ago. Nor is a film 'slick and smug' which goes to the pains of fitting the subject within a world framework which includes Fundamental Education and to the courtesy of including an almost incredible variety of international illustration.

I would have thought, among other things, that a film which attempted to describe the British documentary school's theory of 'bringing the world alive to the citizen' was worthy of greater consideration. That apart, I would certainly have expected a professional journal to take note of the superb use of sound to pace and punctuate the narration, the extraordinary economy and integration achieved by the development of visual metaphor, and the dry editorial violence of, say, cutting 'the proper study of mankind is man' into the baby chittering to death after Hiroshima.

However these one-reel editorials develop and we shall hit the theatres everywhere if we can develop them simply, clearly and dramatically—here, I suggest, is an object lesson in what a pioneer effort involves in the matter of technique. It should not have been missed as such, if only to develop the appropriate argument and clear the ground for further effort.

I shall say less of Montreal by Night, for it is, as you say, 'a modest little film', but why please are you so rattled that, having little to say for the film itself, you dive into the in-

(Continued on page 35)

#### **Overseas**

## Progress in Brazil by Brian Strange

IN BRAZILIAN documentary the chief source of inspiration has been Professor Roquete Pinto, an eminent scientist, man of letters and above all a pioneer in the development of the 'mass media', both of film and radio. As early as 1910 he established the first film library in the National Museum and later placed in it the documentary records of research carried out in the interior of Brazil by the Rondon Commission. As in most other countries it was not until non-inflammable 16 mm stock became available that there was any general appreciation of the possibilities of using films in the classroom. By 1933 the educational authorities of the Federal District were making arrangements for film distribution to schools in the area around Rio de Janeiro, but several more years had to elapse before an attempt was made by the central government to organize this service on a national plane. Then, in January, 1937, the President authorized the establishment of the Instituto Nacional de Cinema Educativo within the framework of the re-constituted Ministry of Education, Roquete Pinto was appointed its first Director and held this post until March, 1947. The terms of reference of this new department were that it should supervise and promote the use of cinematography, both as an aid to instruction in schools and also in the wider field of public enlightenment. To this end it was equipped to produce films (16 mm for schools and 35 mm for public cinemas), to distribute them on request throughout Brazil, and in general to act as an information centre. Technical advice and copying facilities were to be supplied to any privately-owned film unit, provided that its productions could be classed as educational.

(Continued from page 27)

friendship from the people of Peine who appreciated what we were trying to do. They felt strongly the lack of mutual information about cur two countries and if our little film would in any way help to promote an understanding of German problems in England, then they were quite willing to help. The fact that English and German technicians were working together to make the film helped a great deal, though it aroused deep suspicion in the minds of the Russians guarding the frontier between the two Zones when we were shooting there. This was our only serious antagonism, otherwise we might well have been making a film in the English countryside, instead of in Occupied Germany.

And when the shooting was finished and the unit broke up, the two English technicians had a much deeper insight and understanding of Germany today and the difficulties under which the German technicians work. The German technicians, too, had learnt something of the English tradition of documentary film production and later the cameraman was able to visit England for two weeks to study our methods at first hand.

The INCE under the supervision of its preparatory commission had in fact already produced 32 films, with subjects ranging from the celebration of a national holiday to the preparation of vaccine against rabies. By the end of 1946 a total of 306 had been made available for issue, 235 in 16 mm (mostly silent) and the remainder in 35 mm sound. In addition, 233 16 mm and 117 35 mm films had been acquired from various outside sources, by purchase or presentation: but reference to the catalogue reveals that these are not all strictly educational and include Felix and Mickey Mouse cartoons. The rate of INCE production has slowed up in recent years, probably owing to the fact that the financial grant from the Ministry of Education has been considerably reduced, and also because of an acute shortage of 16 mm film stock; this resulted in only three 16 mm and six 35 mm films being issued for 1946. It is somewhat difficult to sort out and classify the INCE's own work under the usual headings. There are a good many medical films, most of which I think were made in collaboration with the University of Sao Paulo, and again there seem to be a certain number definitely designed for use in technical schools. But apart from such specialist material, the natural tendency has been to choose subjects which particularly relate to Brazil itself—its fauna and flora, its industries, places of interest, the lives of famous men of letters and science, and studies of national institutions. For instance, plans for the future include a series of documentaries dealing with the various types of farms and plantations throughout the country. On the whole, the idea seems to have been to produce not so much the instructional type of film as one which would give a general picture of background information, in such a way as to appeal to a wide range of audience. Perhaps because of this general approach, I sometimes had the impression that there had been insufficient certainty as to the purpose and direction of a film: although it is hardly fair to judge by the limited number that I have seen. Technically, these were still a little rough and uneven in quality, with flashes of genius in direction and photography all too often dimmed by lack of professional polish. Also, there seemed to be a tendency to allow the eye of the camera to be diverted from the argument by considerations purely aesthetic and to wander off taking pretty pictures at random (an easy matter in Brazil).

As for distribution, the 300-odd schools in Brazil which possess projectors order their films direct or via their representatives in Rio; otherwise, where the distance is not too great. the INCE can send a machine from its own pool. In 1946 there were 553 film-shows given in schools all over the country. At the same time teachers are efficiently provided with the latest information by D. Hilda Smith de Vasconcellos, who is in charge of the library originally founded with 600 books from Roquete Pinto's own collection and new containing over 2,800 titles. While a large percentage of this total consists of general reference books for the use of documentary workers, the specialist sections dealing with film history, production, criticism, etc., are remarkably full and include most of the standard classics, from the works of Pudovkin to The Factual Film. Among the periodicals, mostly North American, I noticed copies of La Cinematographie Française and Sight and Sound.

The whole organization is now directed by the able and charming Dr Pedro Gouveia Filho, supported by Sr Humberto Mauro as chief technician and an enthusiastic staff. It is to be hoped that before long some of these pioneer workers will be able to visit documentary units in Great Britain, and that in the near future we shall see some of the INCE's productions at an International Festival.



A still from Rhodesia Is this your Country? which will be reviewed in the April Issue

#### FILMS OF THE MONTH

#### ★ International

Voices of Malaya. Crown for Colonial Office through COI. Made by: Ralph Elton and Terry Trench. Photography: Denny Densham. Commentary: V. S. Pritchett. Music: Elizabeth Lutyens. Unit Manager: Eric Hudson. Assistant Directors: Clive Freedman. Yussef Khan, Lee Meow Seong. Assistant Camera: Osman Bin Sansubin. Sound: Red Law, Jock May. Sound Editor: Jean MacKenzie. Assistant Editor: Paul Shortall.

'Orang-wayang-gelap' — maker-of-shadowshows. Years ago, a former co-operative organizer from Malaya so described me on the flyleaf of a book he had written. I hereby formally renounce all claim to the title in favour of the man who has really earned it—Ralph Elton, with his new film. Voices of Malaya.

Let me not be misunderstood. The title was a high compliment, and Elton deserves it. So does Terry Trench, who edited his way through the mass of material Elton shot. Voices of Malaya has been made by a team gifted with what a student in another film, not yet completed, describes as 'the cosmological eye'—the capacity to look out beyond the windows of Government office and film studio and comfortable Englishman's castle to the red, yellow and black men and women who mostly people this world in the process of rebirth, and, rare gift, to understand without patronizing them.

In the first minute or two, I was not sure. Five races of Malaya-Five Faces-perhaps it was only to be another enlightened travelogue. Alexander Shaw, who was there ten years before Elton, and who made that film, will. I think understand and not be offended. But, even in these sequences, once the Sakai had been disposed of, without too many drumtaps or dances, there already began to be a difference. Each new race came visually, by boat, and did not depend for their introduction on the words. And the words themselves, freed from the necessity of being obvious, were expressing so much that was vigorous and unembarrassed. In the Malay sequence there was an uncommented shot looking at first high up a palm-tree from its base to a monkey shinning down towards us, and then tilting down the whole tremendous length with the beast until he reached the Malay waiting for coconuts at the bottom. (Denny Densham, by the way, has done a job of photography on this film, which puts him well up in the ranking list of documentary cameramen.) That shot was so memorable, that, although no words covered it, enormous weight was carried over into the speech of the ambitious Chinaman, hundreds of feet later, who explained that his people did not wait at the bottom of trees for coconuts, but sent the whole family up to fetch them down.

So, on to the Europeans, and to the Indians who flocked from their own overcrowded country into rich Malaya to work for them. Shots of railway engines and factories, and a cynically written commentary, spoken with fruity self-satisfaction, to explain the value to Malaya of Western progress. Volte-face again: after twisting the tails of his countrymen, Elton is mature enough to give them full credit for their hospitals and their schools. Singapore

spreads across the screen, and we recognize it fairly for that mixture of the very good and the very bad that is every modern city.

And then, suddenly, visually, Singapore is smashed, and we are pitchforked into the middle of one of the very few intelligent reports that have reached us from those countries where the war was a matter of solid oppression by alien armies of occupation, instead of only a question, however terrifying, of bombs and threatened invasion. I remember particularly the Japanese officer at his tidy desk being served so decorously with tea in a dainty cup, remember it perhaps mainly because of the contrast, after the ultimate victory, of the English officer sitting at the same desk, now cluttered with bumph, swilling tea from a gigantic mug, and settling down, for want of a secretary, to thump away at his typewriter over the fade-out. That's maybe not a very important example of Elton's reportage, but it will serve as a proof of how far he has managed to get from reliance on mere words. Wait for the aftermath, the skeleton who might be man, woman or boy, lying not as a dead still-life on the pavement, but living and enjoying the cigarette which somebody is lighting for him, and you will see what I mean. Of course, there isn't enough of it, there never is, but very few shots are wasted, and the sum total is somewhere near the journalistic impossibility of making what happened in Malaya, and the quality of the people who live there, at least as real as, say, the story of France be-

tween 1939 and 1944, and as sympathetic as the members of the French Resistance.

The film doesn't end very well. Who can end such a film well nowadays, when the best that can be said is that the five races are at least settling down with equal rights of citizenship, and trying to make a go of it? I think I should have finished more quickly, and got out of the difficulty that way, but, after all, it was not Elton's fault that Indonesia was only just across the road, so to speak, and that tact prevented him from drawing parallels. His film deserves the widest possible theatrical showing, and if the renters want it shortened, well at least he has left himself a convenient way of pacifying them.

#### \* Industrial

Five Towns. Greenpark for Board of Trade through COI. *Producer:* Ralph Keene. *Director:* Terry Bishop. *Associate Producer:* Paul Fletcher. *Camera:* Ray Elton. *Additional Photography:* Jo Amsor. *Story:* Randall Swinger. *Editor:* Peter Tanner. *Music:* Guy Warrack. *Distribution:* Theatrical at present—later non-T. CFL. 50 *minutes.* 

To anyone who has never been to the Potteries, nor into a works devoted (this verb springs to mind after having seen the film) to the making of china, *Five Towns* will give a rounded and essentially human account of that craft. And what a craft it is! There is no more lovely nor satisfying industrial sight than the master-potter creating a sharply intelligent vase out of the dullard lump of wet clay on his wheel: and it is to the credit of the director that we are allowed



Voices of Malaya



Five Towns

to see practically the whole process. As the clay spins and is deftly moulded, the audience can sense the generations of craftsmen behind the potter's eager, firm and restless fingers. Here is pride in work—and work to be proud of.

This atmosphere of pride, this sense of craftsmanship, pervades the whole film: an impression encouraged by the personalized treatment of the story and the warm handling of the characters in it, whether they be members of the family whose existence in the film knits together the various pottery processes, or chance workers in the factories. This relating of a general theme to a personal story, which, judging by the films to be seen that essay it, is an extremely difficult thing to do, in Five Towns is almost entirely successful. The people appear real and ordinary, their surroundings genuine, and the story simple (it centres round the arrival of a bride-to-be from London, to whom the Potteries were as much of a mystery as to the reviewer). Terry Bishop keeps both the family story, and the larger canvas of the Potteries, human and clear, while revealing the processes themselves with an adroitly fluid camera in a manner which maintains their fascination to the layman and builds up to the exciting climax of the potter and his vase. These factory processes have been admirably photographed in a lustre-full 'high-key' style, which makes the most of china's three dimensions and cheerfully airs the more modern works. The dialogue is understandable, for it avoids the 'pitfall of heavy dialect-so often mistakenly wallowed in by documentary in superficial search of character: although audience-interest in local speech is recognized by a glimpse of rich 'Potterytalk'. Altogether, the film is a polished piece of work which it is a pleasure to see for its own sake as well as for the information it contains. If the curtain be lifted occasionally to reveal some products of the Potteries that are both hideous and useless—notably some terrifying china baskets of flowers-that is a very proper revelation for a film to make.

Some will be disappointed that *Five Towns* is not a more penetrating social study. We learn nothing of occupational diseases, rates of pay,

#### NEW FILMS

Your Children's Meals. Made by Realist Film Unit for the Ministry of Health through COI. Producer: John Taylor. Director/Camera: Alex Strasser. Music: Horace Somerville. Camera operator: Fred Moore. Editor: Cliff Boote. Distribution: non-T; 16 and 35. 15 minutes.

One of the now famous 'Your Children's' series in which the Realist Film Unit and the Ministry of Health have collaborated so successfully, this is not, as you might imagine, a factual survey of child dietetics, but a lively and imaginative attempt to make parents understand the rhyme and reason of good feeding habits.

In a series of incidents the film makes points about such things as fussy or 'difficult' feeders, the need for attractive food, children's liking for company, the need for regular meal times, etc. Children are such individual animals that it is difficult to generalize about them; inevitably one is left with doubts about some of the advice given—for example that parents should conceal their own food likes and dislikes. But the idea of the film is not, presumably, to provide ready made solutions to every situation but to make parents think about the problems of feeding from the child's point of view as well as their own, and in this it should be successful. Well directed, the film is notable for an ingenious use of sound and visual effects.

KRO Germany 1947. COI Monthly Release made by Crown Film Unit. *Director*: Graham Wallace. *Camera*: Arndt von Rautenfeld.

This is a film which tells the story of the work of a Kreis Resident Officer—a Kreis being one of the sections into which the British Zone of Germany is divided for administrative purposes. Quietly, as we follow the KRO through a typical day, the film shows the difficulties; the ruins, the refugees, lack of houses and food, shortages of every kind, the hoarders and the snugglers. Somehow these have to be coped with—and to the best of his ability the KRO copes.

To make a film about Germany with a joint team of British and German technicians and to make it a COI monthly release must have been a brave decision; for there are few subjects that arouse such conflicting emotions as the treatment of Germany today. Germany is destitute but the Germans brought misery to millions and might do so again if they had the chance; can we on that account remain indifferent to their present suffering? KRO presents the facts, it offers no comment. To have made a film which steers its way between the Scylla and Charybdis of pity and hatred, and which holds the attention throughout, is a considerable achievement.

Some of the difficulties of international collaboration which were overcome in the production of KRO are described in an article elsewhere in this issue; it only remains to add that no one seeing the film would have suspected them. Unanimously the Reviewing Board had only one grouse; what happened when the KRO went out after the smugglers, and what happened in his court next day? Many documentaries are too long. This one is too short.

Report on Industrial Scotland. Crown for COI. Directed, written and edited by A. S. Graham. Distribution: T. to Non-T. 10 minutes.

This is the third in a series (Report on Coal, Report on Electricity) which has a similar aim to radio's Progress Report. Incidentally, for the record, Crown were two months ahead of the BBC. The issue under review deals with industrial development in the central belt of Scotland, stretching from Glasgow to Edinburgh. Sixty thousand people have emigrated from the area since VE day, and, in an endeavour to halt this drain on manpower, new factories are being built, with an emphasis on light engineering and on jobs which can be done by women.

The difficulty of compressing this story into ten minutes has not been entirely overcome. Consequently, the treatment seems hurried and rather confused: we are left with an impression of great activity, but with little understanding of the problems, and, therefore, of how far this activity is likely to solve them. Partly, this is the fault of the commentary: delivery is fresh and interesting, but somehow the voice just lacks sureness and authority.

But, whatever its teething troubles on questions of presentation, this series is to be warmly welcomed. It is tackling an urgent and important job, and a few more films like it would enable us to feel that Government information was beginning to live up to the needs of the country's situation.

Overseas Trade. World Wide for Banking Information Services in association with Film Centre. Producer: Ralph Bond. Director: Charles de Lautour, Camera: Geoffrey Williams. Commentary: Robert MacDermott. Distribution: Non-T. 20 minutes.

An attempt to explain to the uninitiated the mysteries of international currency exchange. A purely undramatized film which tells how something works or anything is done can always have its uses. This film does not strike one as very satisfactory in this respect—its handling is clumsy and its whole conception muddled. One feels that the subject, potentially fascinating, deserves a more inspired treatment. This film will fill a gap until a better one is made

(Continued on page 35, col. 3)

#### Nationalism and

#### Internationalism

#### by R. E. Whitehall

THE first International Film Workers' Congress, held in Czechoslovakia during 1947, passed a resolution reading:

Screen art is the most universal and lively medium of expression and spreads human knowledge and all artistic and social aspirations of the people. It is most democratic by nature, and a most remarkable instrument for bringing nations nearer to one another, and promoting a new feeling of common responsibility which will bring peace to the world.

That nation can only speak peace unto nation when the barriers of racial hatred and rabid nationalism have been swept away is only too true; that the cinema is the most potent medium to do it is obvious; that the cinema has been, and still is, grossly misused for this purpose is only too evident.

The driving force behind most films being made now is still hatred, and hatred is the festering sore in which the microbes of war germinate. That the countries of Europe should make films dealing with national hatreds was only to be expected, but that former allies should now indulge in name-calling through the medium of the cinema while their statesmen chant bitter and uncontrolled psalms of hatred in the world's councils is a disheartening spectacle.

It is not without interest that the annual report of the American Civil Liberties Union, issued just before the notorious Committee of Un-American Activities investigation opened, recorded that progress in the basic freedoms had been halted during 1947, and that hardening of feeling in the States towards Communism had been reflected in the suspicion with which progressive measures and opinions had been greeted.

This feeling, running at times into the high hysteria unparalleled since the Bolshevik scare of 1920, has been crystallized by the Hollywood probe, and the ideas—ranging from innocuous to mildly Socialist—which may get one branded as a Communist, a crypto-Communist, or a fellow-traveller, have been dragged into the open.

Fortunately for Hollywood, at almost the same time Mr Dore Schary, vice-president of RKO-Radio, was writing, with regard to his production of *Crossfire*, that if the cinema reverts to the 'sedative function' it will stagnate.

Crossfire is the first of a series of films in which racial prejudice comes under devastating attack, with its outspoken criticisms of the bigotry characterizing relationships between Gentile and Jew.

Unfortunately Hollywood has not yet attempted to combat or abandon the stereotyped characterizations of coloured people in its films—the 'mammy' smiling all over her lovable old face, the 'comic relief' terrified of the darkness or the elements—the implied statement that coloured people should be relegated to inferior

social positions. These things constitute a restatement of the exploded theory of race as surely as any of the films from Nazi Germany did.

Meanwhile, from Moscow, come reports of anti-British or anti-American sentiments in new Soviet productions. The Battle for Stalingrad supports the view that the Western Powers waited until Russia had sufficiently weakened German military might before invading Western Europe. Admiral Nakhimov, a biography of the defender of Sebastopol in 1853, is not notably conciliatory in its picturing of the British, although in this particular instance there would be as little use in suppressing the conflict of Britain and Russia as there would be in suppressing the conflict of Britain and France in the screen version of Henry V.

Unfortunately the inopportune time of appearance, and the fact that the ideological content is in line with the official propaganda must place Admiral Nakhimov on the list of those films which are not likely to spread knowledge and understanding of fundamental problems, or create international goodwill.

In Britain producers are too busily engaged on other things to worry about the ideological war being conducted through the medium of the screen elsewhere. If Britain has no *Iron Curtains* or *Soviet Spies* (subjects announced by American

companies) in immediate prospect, she has no constructive ideas either, with the possible exception of Paul Rotha's 40-minute documentary, The World is Rich, which, on being shown to the representatives of forty-eight nations and eighteen international organizations at the Food and Agriculture Conference in Geneva, was called by Sir John Boyd Orr, 'this superb contribution to international understanding'.

It has been left to the smaller European countries to make the most valuable contribution to the cause of international amity. Switzerland with *The Last Chance*, and Italy with a series of beautifully conceived productions, beginning with *Open City*. This film, in which Roberto Rosselini believed so implicitly that he pawned many of his personal belongings in order to complete, is not an expression of hatred, it is not 'anti' in any factional sense but a drama, rather, of the eternal conflict between the good and evil in men. Perhaps this is because the film is based so very closely on life, with each of its chief protagonists—the priest, the underground leader, the Gestapo chief—being taken from real life.

Vivere en Pace goes even further, in that it can look at the immediate past without bitterness. There is no hatred for the Germans, rather a pity for the shambling little man who is left in the Italian mountain village as a symbol of the 'herrenvolk'. There is good and evil in all men and all nations, and the Italians, out of all the film-making nations, seem to be the only ones capable of accepting it.

If the promotion of international understanding, with its ghastly alternative, depended on such films as *Mrs Miniver* or *Song of Russia*, both frequently cited as examples of films made for the specific purpose of familiarizing one group of people with the problems of another, then the cause would be hopeless, but the Italians have demonstrated that the screen is the finest medium for the propagation of peace and justice in this one world.

#### **DFN COMPETITIONS**

#### RESULT OF COMPETITION First prize

#### No. I

THE spirit of Elizabethan days is not very easy to capture, but competitors have worked hard and sent in many excellent entries. One of the cleverest came from France and took the form of quotations—it was an ingenious idea but did not quite keep to the terms of reference. Francis Bacon, Marlow, Hayluyt, Shakespeare and Raleigh were the most popular script-writers. Particularly good was 'The Uses of Shepherdesses: an important contribution to the increase of productivity in Rural Areas: by Nick Breton', and we must also mention 'Players Please by W. Shakespeare: a film to encourage the tobacco trade'

It has been difficult to select the winning entries, but first prize finally goes to John Shearman, Basic Films, 18 Soho Square, W1, partly for his excellent Elizabethan English and partly because he seems best to have translated our Central Office of Information into Elizabeth's Privy Council

A good second is 'Swiss' who is especially to be commended for being short, sharp and to the point.

ELIZABETH REGINA

PRIVY COUNCIL FYLMS DYVYSION
Programme of Fylms Destyned for Production
in ye Fynancial Year of Our Blessyd Lord 1588 9.

For Ye War Office

THUNDER OF YE HARQUEBUS

Ye passyinge of ye Longbowe and yts replacement by firearms of divers kinds as weapons for Hyr Majestie's Soldiers and Militiamen.

Scrypt: CHRISTOPHER MARLOW

For Ye Admiralty

MEN OF THE FIRESHIP

With a synchronized yntroductorie discourse by The Lord Howard of Effingham.

Scrypt: RICHARD HAKLUYT

For Ye Board of Trade

An account of ye advantages to be gained for the Queen's subjects at hoame from Trade beyond the Seas, especially with ye Neu Discov'rd Virginias.

Scrypt: SIR W. RALEIGH

For Ye Ministry of Health

STAKE, RACK AND BLOCK

Thyr use against the Diseases Politick of our Tyme, together with Remedial Action where Applicable.

Scrypt and Technical Advysor: J. KETCH

For Ye Ministry of Agriculture

YE BACON CONTROVERSIE

From a Treatment by Wm. Shakespeare.

Scrypt: FRANCIS BACON

For Ye Ministry of Education

THE QUEEN WE LOVE

A Trybute to Hyr Sovran Majestje GLORIANA our Ruler and Royal Mistress.

Conceived and Executed by ROBERT DEVEREAUX, EARLE OF ESSEX

Given at our Palace of Nonsuch, 1588,

John Shearman

#### Second prize

War Office

Admiralty

Doe Not Let's Be Beastlye to the Spaniards-

Goe West, Young Man RALEIGH

Board of Trade

The Guild Must Goe FLETCHER

Health

Pox 1588 JONSON

Agriculture

Doe Not Fence Me In BACON

Education

The Worlde is Round HACKLUYT

Nom de Plume: Swiss

#### DFN COMPETITION No. 3

The usual prizes are offered for a letter (not over 200 words) to a kindly but inquisitive aunt who wants to know how documentary films differ from other films. Competitors should remember that the word 'documentary' has been applied to almost every kind of film from the abstract cartoon to features like The Grapes of Wrath.

Entries should reach the Editor before April 1st. Results will appear in the May issue.

#### **NEWS FROM** UNITED NATIONS

AT THE second Regular Session of the United Nations in 1947 the budget of the UN Department of Public Information for 1948 was drastically cut at the instance of Britain, USA and USSR. It was decided that Visual Information should suffer most in view of the high cost of its material and manufacture and the 1948 films programme was, therefore, completely abandoned. UN are now hoping that governments and private companies will make the necessary films at their own expense-UN will willingly assist with information and library material but cannot offer any financial

Films from the 1947 programme will be distributed throughout 1948 so that the gap in production will not be felt until next year. The People's Charter is the only UN film available here to date and it is having excellent bookings through CFL. The next one, Searchlight on the Nations, will shortly be available for theatrical distribution.

#### A Technician at a Conference

THE PROFESSIONAL scientific film-maker who attended the Scientific Film Association's Conference on Films in Agriculture on January 17th, came away feeling about as low as a sheep's stomach worm. He went there hoping to learn something and more or less prepared to be told how to do his job by agricultural experts who would undoubtedly throw him head-first into the midden if he tried to tell them how to run their farms. His expectations were more than fulfilled. He and his colleagues. a decent and hard-working lot on the whole, were accused:

(1) of making the changes between scenes too quick (boy, order up a 48 frame cut from scene 127 to scene 128); (2) of choosing commentators with (a) Oxford, (b) other university, (c) local, (d) non-local, (e) unintelligible, and (f) non-Scottish accents, none of which are acceptable to the farming audience; (3) of panning the camera too little, but (4) of paying too much attention to camera work and general technique; (5) of including (a) too much and (b) too little veterinary detail; and (6) of making films for specialized audiences which are unsuitable for totally different audiences. In addition he was urged to pay more attention to tempo and construction, but to write scripts without any Long Shots, Close Ups or other esoteric camera instructions, and he was adjured to investigate his subjects more closely, to consult more people, to think more carefully about this, to examine that more fully, to give more attention to the other, and simultaneously to reduce both his costs and his production time very considerably or else!

All this the professional film maker bore calmly, especially as his self-respect had been judiciously restored by the exhibition of Artificial Insemination, but his patience and good temper finally broke when someone implied that after finishing shooting on Sex in the Sun on a Friday he turns briskly to his unit and says through a Sol Hogwasch megaphone, OK boys, Monday we go to town on Parasites of the Uterus in the Ruminant Ovis Aries.' At this point a number of professional film makers very rudely shouted out 'Nonsense!'; they now wish to apologize to the Chairman for a breach of good manners which was only committed under extreme provocation.

The professional film-maker again began to utter short sharp yelps of agony at the news that he wastes far too much time on location waiting for perfect lighting conditions. The writer has just (January, 1948) spent two weeks (and expects to spend several more weeks) waiting on location for the right weather conditions to shoot a film sequence. Every day he and his unit leave London far too early in the morning in order to arrive in a part of the country which they heartily dislike by ten o'clock, when the sun might conceivably be shining. As it is not shining they wait, in a rather cold Nissen hut, sitting on hard wooden boxes, with the general noise at a higher level than they can comfortably tolerate, till threethirty, when the sun can be presumed to have set. Then they return, and do it all over again next day. Occasionally they get a shot, but only by being all ready to get going as soon as a fair cloud-break appears. They cannot go far away from the Nissen hut in case of a sudden change in the prevailing gloom. They are browned off. They are not doing this for fun. from perversity, nor to put the costs of the film up artificially. They actively dislike doing it. But they have learned by dire experience that if they shot in the wrong conditions they will not make a satisfactory film. Their sense of professional responsibility keeps them waiting. They would not waste time boringly on location, when they might be doing something interesting elsewhere, without a very good reason, and nor would any other unit.

A speaker at the Conference alleged that film could be of little use in agricultural research, since phenomena recorded on film could not be accurately measured. He spoke without the facts. As long ago as 1936 the bouncing qualities of steel ball-bearings were being accurately measured (as part of a routine sampling) by slow motion cinematography and subsequent frame-by-frame analysis. The sideways movement of a railway coach wheel on the rail at various train speeds and at various stages of the life of the wheel were filmed and thus accurately measured and compared at about the same date. In both these cases no other suitable technique presented itself, and the investigations could not have proceeded without the use of cinematography. More recently, and especially during the war, motion picture techniques have been widely adapted to research into physical and engineering problems. There is no reason to suppose that these techniques are inherently unsuited to agricultural research.

The view that there is no place for the nonprofessional film-maker is, of course, untenable, but it is interesting to note that when films of a technical or instructional character are open to criticism, it is generally found that they fail in one or more of three respects; either they do not say the right things, or they try to say unfilmic things, or they fail in clarity of exposition, either by word or picture. All these kinos of failure are due not to too much professionalism, but rather to insufficient professionalism in investigation and production.

Edgar Anstey gave great satisfaction with his defence of the professional production of the kinds of film needed in agriculture. His cutting room, with moviolas, film bins, strips of film and re-winds was a masterly piece of description. A pity, perhaps, that it contained no human occupant; that harassed looking character in a pullover, the editor, had presumably crept out for a quiet dig at his allot-

So the professional film-maker, having had a quiet dig at the Conference, must now creep back to his location, first expressing warm thanks to SFA for a stimulating and excellently provisioned day.

#### BASIL WRIGHT **CLOSE-UP**

Wright arrived in our then slender midst, with a great family tradition of liberalism, a classical degree from Cambridge, and two exercises in film which derived from neither. The first was a study in nudity and popped back and forward between diving boards and water splashes in a manner then greatly affected by the discards from the Cambridge Football Fifteen. The second was about a haggard young character who threw himself about from chair to chair, gazed periodically at the rain in the window, then spread red-currant jelly all over his face so that he could more realistically commit suicide under a bus in front of the National Gallery.

Both efforts were so delightful that Basil Wright was (a) given two prizes for enthusiasm, and (b) put to honest work at 25s. a week. For a period thereafter he concentrated on Canadian apples and Burma teak in 500-feet lengths, presumably in preparation for a career in the City. He thereby so gained the habit of brevity that, invited on one momentous occasion to recut a feature, he promptly shortened it to a

rather bad one-reeler.

John Taylor, who was about 7 at the time and pushing the EMB barrow from door to door, in shorts and school cap of questionable origin, continues the narrative. 'Young Bas,' he says 'then started out on the next stage as Director-Cameraman,' and I quote. This, one remembers, was a film originally called Shepherd's Spring which was a good title, only Box Office reared its caliban head and called it O'er Hill and Dale. What happened was that B. W. listened to a certain great shepherd called Martin in a pub in Hawick, Scotland, took quiet and gentle account of his betters, as is his genius, and made one of the nicest things done in these days, in the matter of a week. It is quite certain that Martin, like that other great man Chaplin, produced, directed and acted the film, but our Basil was the boy who was there. He was then rightly heralded as the most promising poet in the group. This aesthetic demonstration cost £120 and it made ten times its money with a musical fol-derol attached, to make you weep. A recent film on the same subject which cost probably twenty times as much, did not know what it was about when it came to the cloud shadows hurrying across the hills, and this may be because it did not have Basil or, especially, Martin. This, however, is the merest guess. To be young, and good, and humble, and search instinctively and confidently for the qualities we once saw in the poetry books, seems to become increasingly difficult. Is it conservatism? Is it socialism? I never know.

At this point, our character had, so to speak, proved himself. He was the cheapest director around and so proud of it that on an unaccompanied trip to the West Indies he made six films— Windmill in Barbados, Cargo from Jamaica, etc, etc.—on a negative allowance of rather less than two to one. The net affect of this was to give his producers false ideas of his powers ever afterwards. The economy of his vision they took for granted; the luxury of exotic habits incidentally acquired was something else again. The more

IT IS now 18 or 19 years since young Basil Charles serious issue came to a head in the publication of the only great work on Rum Swizzles ever presented to Alcoholics Anonymous, and the organization of the best party between the wildish 90's and Princess Elizabeth's wedding. His closer friends avoided it but stayed on the telephone with strong police contingents nearby to be rushed to the spot in case of necessity.

> In some manner or other he sandwiched into these looser days a quiet little film about the country coming to town and took it so seriously that he acquired a claypit in Essex and started the impossible task of turning it into an exercise in horticulture.

> Song of Cevlon came in here and it is a curious story. It was not invented, as some say, because of Gervais Huxley's Ceylon Tea Propaganda Board. It was invented because John Taylor had



gone off with Robert O'Flaherty, the well-known descendant of the God-save-us-from-the Accursed O'Flaherties, on a two-year holiday in Aran, to say the least, had gone native. Like the first Russian Ambassador to the Court of St James's, he was dropping £5 notes and other sundries indiscriminately. His hair was long to his shoulders. He had achieved in Aran the slaphappy state of total emancipation. Some of us felt that a visit to the Orient was called for, where the influence of O'Flaherty, Pat Mullen and Tiger King, might be countered, if only a trifle, by contact with the Sahibs east of Suez. Personnel management was more or less at its best in these days. Wright was sent along to do something about the Buddha on the side.

B.W. took Song of Ceylon so seriously that one doubts if a director ever went on a journey better equipped in knowledge of the region he was to visit, and from the deeps. A dozen others helped him on his return, and particularly Walter Leigh and Cavalcanti, but the man who knew about the drums from the beginning and reached into a sense of this other people, was this liberal scion of a liberal family, making poetry out of his liberalism. It was nice to see, and maybe many more things should happen that way out of the blood and basic. When this writer thinks of Song of Ceylon it is not for the pieces of sound experiment but for the otherworld quality achieved by a young man who gave

himself up to his subject. Incidentally, Song of Cevlon was one of the few films ever made without thought of the audience. We said for once, the hell with the audience, let the bastards wait even if the shot is 175 feet long and prayer in any case should be sweet and slow. It was, in the highest sense, a personal film. In the meantime, one should add, John Taylor fulfilled the actual contract with the Tea Propaganda Board, tuxedo and all, and disappeared to a university somewhere to polish up his Irish. It was quite the prettiest combination of talents while it

Here, he takes over the story himself. 'By now, Wright was Senior Director. The Unit, renamed the GPO Film Unit, had been growing and Wright had to take over some of the production and administration work. Documentary extended every year of its first fifteen years and someone had to help train new people, start new Units, produce, dig up films, and all the other thankless jobs. This, of course, was the end of many of the best of the directors. Nearly always it was the same story. A director would do some production work, but would make one or two films a year. In the end they always became so involved on the production side that direct film-making became impossible.

This is true enough. Wright, Legg, Rotha and half a dozen others were prevailed upon in one measure or other to give up their own filmmaking so that a new generation of film makers might have service and guidance. Wright was the first of the sacrifices and, with his immensely immediate sense of film and film-making, it was almost in the nature of a personal hurt. His cooperation at this strategic moment in the development of the documentary film should be the more warmly noted for what it represented in service to others than himself. It is now commonly allowed that he is one of the best producers in the group as he is certainly one of the most tutored in public service and one of the most sensible in common council, but those who know him know also that he could cut the pants off any cutter in the business, and feel and see the memorable image as few are born to do. The script of Night Mail was Wright's, though the shooting detail of Watt was out of his rough, rich self, and the cutting was Wright's though Cavalcanti in a burst of inventive quality gave it its sound line. It was perhaps Wright's last outing as Jimmy the One on the fo'c'sle head.

John Taylor goes on, 'He was Studio Manager at Blackheath, he started Realist-he ran Film Centre—he was producer at Crown—adviser to the MOI-started International Realist-and in the meantime had a hundred and one odd but necessary jobs. He served on Ouota Committees -was a member of ASFP-financed World Film News-and edited DNL. He promoted hundreds of films and produced and advised possibly on a thousand. He lectured, wrote criticisms for several papers, and served on scores

of organizations and committees.

Unfortunately for Wright, he was the most successful of the documentary producers. It was not only that he produced many of the best films such as Men of Africa, Children at School, Face of Scotland, The Harvest Shall Come, Neuropsychiatry, Diary for Timothy and Children on Trial, but, for some unknown reason, he was trusted and confided in by all and sundry. The sponsors trusted him—the units—the producers and the technicians—everyone was willing to take his word.

'In the middle of a violent dispute between wo bits of documentary, you would find that both sides were consulting him, even if he was artisan. If someone had a nervous breakdown, was in debt, or his wife was leaving him, it was tlways Uncle Bas who was rung up to advise the best doctor, arrange a loan, or go and get the wife back. There is no overdrawing of the strange rirtues of Uncle Bas,' concludes John Taylor.

But this, this other observer says, was plain mough to see and why. Wright is a born artist, but he was born also into a tradition of public ervice and, like so many others of his kind, he as sacrificed art, which must for ever be in some legree selfish, for the other and Roman order. Whether it is right to do so, anyone can speculate upon. There, I say, goes a very perfect gentle knight, as gentle as one knows.

Today, Wright continues in the quiet habits of liking concerts and the ballet, and reading immensely and in the classical manner; he still persistently and impossibly digs in his Essex claypit; he is grey as he should not be, but has a capacity for going dark again when he feels good; he has stooped shoulders but will straighten himself miraculously if he finds his old fine wit flashing again; he slopes over bars ordinarily, but in Paris, of all places, lives like a monk. He is, in fact, at 40, going through the difficult period of deciding whether to grow old or young again; and one would suspect, and this for the better, that he is a little weary of well-doing. He

is incidentally one of the few amongst us who can afford the luxury of giving some time to the dilemna

Wright today can have pretty well anything he likes on the public service side of documentary in the UN, in the British Government service, or elsewhere. He has acquired all the talents and training for the desks of responsibility. On the other hand, one suspects there was something we did not make over when we turned him into a producer. If the original, and native, and highly personal talent spurts again, he would be the best directorial bet in the business. This is one bet placed that Basil Charles Wright will, after long years, be out on location again with the spring.

#### GRIERSON TO REVIEW BOARD (Continued from page 28)

formation sheet and give that a kicking around instead? Is it maybe that you just don't like Canada or something? Forgive me if, liking Canada very much in general and Montreal in particular, I say that 'this modest little film' has a very nice music track with some pleasant snatches of French-Canadian music and not least the snatch from La Claire Fontaine. Permit me to say that whatever the blurb saysand they do, you know, everywhere in the world —the film itself is modest in tone and, except maybe for the little French-Canadian girl who grins too much, and I never liked these loving couples wandering through films anyway, it is a film which makes you feel warm about one of the warmest cities in the world.

And lastly, as to Condition Improved. This, to my mind, is a good clear unpretentious report, where the film producers have quite rightly not tried to put their techniques, or whatever you call them, between their subject and the functional exposition of occupational therapy which they were asked for.

It seems to me not very useful to condemn a film for not doing what it was never designed to do. It was supposed to be a general introduction to occupational therapy with a wide range of examples in the different fields of treatment, and I think it is, with the exception of the psychiatric sequence which seems to have been butchered somewhere along the line. It is true that the material is sufficient for a dozen or more detailed films, but it is strictly as a general introduction that this film presents itself. The fact of the matter, I am assured, is that the film has done its job and has been well received by audiences of doctors, nurses and relatives of patients for whom it was intended.

What all this amounts to is not that everything from Canada is good. I love Canada dearly but, in some respects, it is not good at all. I say this just to demonstrate that I can be as stuffy a character as your composite self in certain matters Canadian.

I have the impression, for instance, that Canada is not very knowledgeable about political philosophy or the law, especially in the higher branches of these disciplines, though on the other hand it is enormously good at economics. It is somewhat crude in parliamentary debate and there are more cockerels crowing on local editorial dunghills than you could conceive outside Lilliput, but on the other hand, it has a remarkable Institute of

International Affairs and solid groups of political study in every town in the country.

Its public life lacks courage and Canada is the village that voted the earth was flat, in the denial of its size and destiny. Yet, its carelessness of distance is fantastic and its individual adventures into the Arctic, epic. Its educational standards are in many quarters grotesque and, in some quarters, subject to a species of provincial fascism which is both ignorant and vicious. Yet, the library work, the adult educational developments and the extension services of the voluntary associations are heartening and good.

Canada, especially, can be a great bore when it tries to match its sophistication with the larger and deeper versions thereof. 'Sunset, and evening star and one clear call for Bill the lone fisherman.' But over and under these variations and anomalies, there is a profound element of common sense and good taste about Canada and Canadian life which is a precious thing to know.

This the Film Board reflects and demonstrates. It is a relatively young unit. Its style is based on a policy of doing a large number of jobs with the money it has and they are all, except for the work of Norman McLaren's experimental unit, practical jobs fitted to a particular need and a particular audience. In its effort to do as many jobs as possible, it does not spend nearly as much money on a film as we do in Britain.

Inevitably and for these reasons, its style is a reportage style which avoids the larger flights, though indeed the quality of reportage camera work, the development of editorial economy and pace, and the creative use of music and sound represent valuable and certain progress. The larger flights I am sure will come and all the more surely now that so many have learned that the first thing first is to handle a narrative. I even believe, as I watch some of the more complex approaches to documentary, that it might be better if many others followed the Canadian example for the simple.

Whatever you say of the Canadian films, they are seen everywhere in Canada, are part of the life of the nation; and the people who make them are happy in a sense of public service recognized, and there is none of that sense of frustration of which one hears so much complaint in England. It may be that, now and again, they are a trifle too simple, but surely the exchange of personnel to and from Europe

—not to mention a more thoughtful criticism on the part of *DFN*—would soon cure that.

If you think that, out of personal affection and regard, I am prejudiced, be sure I am. But if you want to make anything of it, at least you won't find me a composite individual to go after. I am at your service.

JOHN GRIERSON

#### FILMS OF THE MONTH

(Cont. from page 31)

relations between employee and employer, and so on—in fact the film skirts the battleground of social progress. On the whole, that criticism. while indicating a real gap in the subject-matter, would be unfair, for the film gives the appearance of being first and foremost concerned with the description of an age-old exercise of a skill, and it is some measure of its success that it manages to do this in such glowing human terms that we miss the fuller study. That it also manages to include by implication such things as a mild condemnation of the older types of furnaces which pollute the air of the towns with their belching smoke, and to invest a more progressive works like Wedgwoods with a greater air of spaciousness and mechanical efficiency, is perhaps all we can expect from what is so much a process film.

A fairer criticism, taking the film at its facevalue, would be of a weakness in the story of the family (centring round the son and his fiancée), which lacks precision in its later development. In their story, there is no compensating peak to match the careful unfolding of the pottery processes.

However, a film with such a desirable accent on the human being and his acquired skill, and bearing so much of interest, merits the widest showing in cinemas and outside them; not only because it is a satisfying piece of film-making, but also because it captures in a kindly way the daily work of men and women engaged in one of our most intriguing and famous industries.

#### VISUAL UNITS

SIR; Here is some information that Joan couldn't give Marjorie in her charming letter in your January issue. The Visual Unit Water Supply in its entirety cost £6,393 to produce The COI man is now quite sure

Yours sincerely,

DENIS TORMAN Lilms Division COL

#### CORRESPONDENCE

#### Trade Unions-from Ralph Bond

sir: It is good to know that the views expressed by Ken Cameron in your latest issue 'do not necessarily coincide with those of the Editorial Board'. Ken, if he will forgive my saying so, has indulged his imaginary grievances against ACT in a manner that does no credit to his customary scientific thinking.

He says that ACT has failed to keep its membership (1) well looked after and (2) united. As to (1), he quickly contradicts himself by announcing that ACT has done 'work of inestimable value' and that 'salary rates and working conditions have reached levels undreamt of before the war', so I'll leave it at that.

As regards keeping the members united, few will dispute that ACT has successfully created a Trade Union uniting studio technicians, documentary technicians, laboratory and news reel technicians—to say nothing of technicians in television, cartoon animation and still-strip companies, stock manufacturing companies, like Kodak, and equipment companies, like British Acoustic. All sections have their own particular problems; all have found that they have been well served within the very broad and democratic structure of the Union.

Ken Cameron charges ACT with obstructionism, but produces no single instance, unless it is his complaint that an enthusiastic technician cannot work all night long if the spirit moves him. This old tale has been trotted out for years. It's the excuse for every Union-buster in the country and the same argument could equally apply against trade unionism in the mines or in transport, or any other industry. I don't suppose anyone at Crown will object if Ken's spirit moves him to work all night but the local ACT Committee would, quite rightly, have something to say if his spirit required the presence of numerous other technicians who might reasonably prefer to spend a few hours in bed. After all, film making is a collective job and a Union is not to be blamed for establishing the greatest good for the greatest number.

I heartily agree with him in asking for members, who disagree with ACT policy, to take a more active attitude. There may be a few autocratic shop stewards; if so, I haven't met them; neither have I met the extremists '... eager to

be agin everything and everybody' but, if they exist, it's up to the members to take them in hand.

The point—completely ignored by Ken—is that ACT *encourages* such rank and file activity and has constructed machinery which, in my experience, is more democratic from bottom to top than any other Trade Union I know of.

Unsupported accusations, vague generalizations, petty references to 'sheeplike satellites' and petulant innuendoes about 'autocrats' are not going to get anybody anywhere.

ACT has done a big job apart from improving the standards and status of its members. The very Apprenticeship Scheme to which Ken refers has been fought and campaigned for by ACT over many years and has at last secured the support of employers. ACT has given a lead on all questions affecting the health of our industry; its policy has been progressive, democratic and imaginative.

I suggest that Ken Cameron should, as befits a leading and respected technician, pull his weight in ACT in a constructive manner instead of narking at all and sundry.

Yours sincerely,

RALPH BOND

40 Parliament Hill, NW3

#### Ken Cameron Replies

SIR: Ralph Bond has answered me, with flattering promptitude, lucidly and almost convincingly, in the terms one would expect from such an ardent pillar of trade unionism. He has in fact repeated the admirable aims of a well-ordered and well-organized body of workers. But he makes the fundamental mistake of failing to distinguish between theory and practice. He has misread my comments upon the success of ACT as the technicians' fairy godmother. I said very emphatically that I have nothing but praise for so much of the work done in the past. As far as our unity is concerned, certainly ACT has succeeded in binding together technicians of all categories, but they are bound with bonds of inflexible steel, forged by those who prefer to be known as brothers rather than members into something approaching an instrument of social blackmail.

Ralph says that my grievances are imaginary. That is where he is so terribly wrong. They are, it is true, largely indefinable. They are caused by an attitude in the minds of those who at present settle our destiny. There are occasions in every walk of life, and the film business is no exception,

when rules and regulations must be interpreted with common sense as well as discipline; when even a little sense of humour—so terribly lacking—could be so vitally useful.

He implies that I am a union-buster because I 'trot out' the old case of the technician who might want to work all night. Does Ralph never think of his work after six o'clock? Does he never wake up in the night wondering how on earth he is going to solve some problem that the morrow will bring? If not it's a pretty poor look-out for World Wide Films.

I see eye to eye with Ralph on so much that he has said. It is what he has ignored—perhaps even does not know, although that is hard to believe—that gives me cause for worry. Nor only to me because I know that I am far from alone in my opinions. We can all see if we only look in the right direction the number of man-hours wasted through union officials holding meetings to solve problems which would not even exist if they simply concentrated on the jobs for which they are paid.

He suggests that I pull my weight in ACT, and not nark at all and sundry. Is ACT so perfect that it defies criticism? Or does it just resent it? I am not narking at all and sundry. I am simply trying to have a crack at the minority who mistake the shadow for the substance.

KEN CAMERON

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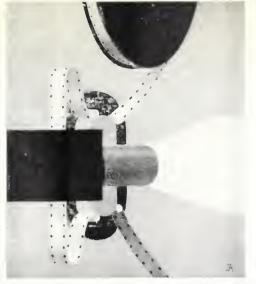
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#### CINEMA

CREDIT for the actual invention of the cinematograph is difficult to apportion. It is certain that Englishmen played an important part. As long ago as 1860 Sir John Herschel published a theory of cinematography, and about 1889 a patent for a cinema camera and projector was applied for by W. Errese Greene and M. Evans. Today the cinema is our great relaxation. But how many of us who go to "the movies", who watch the latest performance of our particular "star", realise what the cinematograph industry owes to the workers in many branches of science and technology, and not least to

the chemist? No other form of entertainment owes him so heavy a debt. Celluloid itself, the basis of the industry, is a chemical achievement. This must be transparent to give clear images after great magnification, resilient and tough to stand great strain. It must be so treated that the danger from fire is reduced to a minimum. The hand of the chemist is indeed traceable from the make-up of the actors to the lamps in the projectors. In the apparatus used for the sound-recording rare metals are needed: in the lenses of cameras and projectors, optical glass of the highest quality: in the colour-photography, pigments of the truest and most vivid colour. The sets for the ballrooms and palaces of the cinema's Cloudcuckoodom involve the use of large

quantities of paints, quick-drying stucco and plasters: the costumes and draperies must be dyed. The tale is continued into the cinema theatre itself, in its decoration, its disinfection, its air-conditioning. When next you sit in your favourite cinema, think for a moment of the patient work in laboratory and factory that has enabled you to see the wonders of the world or the linest product of the cinematograph studio so clearly and still at so modest a price.



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# DOCUMENTARY FULLINGS

INCORPORATING DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

APRIL 1948

5

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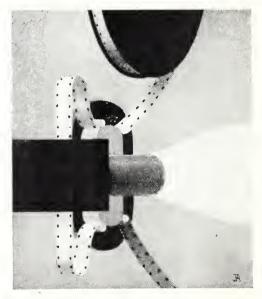


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# JOHN GRIERSON

DOCUMENTARY TECHNICIANS ALLIANCE LTD. 21 SOHO SQUARE W1. GERRARD 2826



# CINEMA

CREDIT for the actual invention of the einematograph is difficult to apportion. It is certain that Englishmen played an important part. As long ago as 1860 Sir John Hersehel published a theory of cinematography, and about 1889 a patent for a cinema camera and projector was applied for by W. Friese Greene and M. Evans. Today the einema is our great relaxation. But how many of us who go to "the movies", who watch the latest performance of our particular "star", realise what the cinematograph industry owes to the workers in many branches of science and technology, and not least to

the chemist? No other form of entertainment owes him so heavy a debt. Celluloid itself, the basis of the industry, is a chemical achievement. This must be transparent to give clear images after great magnification, resilient and tough to stand great strain. It must be so treated that the danger from fire is reduced to a minimum. The hand of the chemist is indeed traceable from the make-up of the actors to the lamps in the projectors. In the apparatus used for the sound-recording rare metals are needed: in the lenses of cameras and projectors, optical glass of the highest quality: in the colour-photography, pigments of the truest and most vivid colour. The sets for the ballrooms and palaees of the cinema's Cloudcuckoodom involve the use of large

quantities of paints, quick-drying stucco and plasters: the costumes and draperies must be dyed. The tale is continued into the cinema theatre itself, in its decoration, its disinfection, its air-conditioning. When next you sit in your favourite cinema, think for a moment of the patient work in laboratory and factory that has enabled you to see the wonders of the world or the finest product of the cinematograph studio so clearly and still at so modest a price.



# DOCUMENTARY film news

VOL. 7 NO. 64 APRIL 1948

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### WHICH HUNT?

IT MAY BE too much at this stage to hope to find unanimity in the bewildered, muddled, dollarpounded, scatter-brained, boomslumped and junglebooked collection of human oddities which make up the film trade. But anyone who has kept an eye on the far-toosuccessful idiocies of the Committee on un-American activities might well feel that now, and not later, is the time for the British film industry to think very carefully about the implications of the current purge of Communists instituted by the Labour Government. DFN does not play party politics, and we are quite prepared to believe or disbelieve, in the danger of having party members within certain areas of the Civil Service; but there is, on any and every count, something nasty about the secrecy, the lack of public judgment and right of appeal, which enshrouds the measures announced by Mr Attlee. Both on general grounds of the wellbeing of the State, and because there are not a few film-workers who are in the direct employ of the Government (and there'd be lots more if ACT had its way and nationalized us), all people in the Trade should ponder carefully the long-term implications of the purge. Will it turn into a witch-hunt? And if so, which witch hunt? Against traitors, or against 'progressives'? These questions are of especial importance to all members of the documentary film movement and their 'fellow-travellers' (teachers etc), because the documentary movement has been, and will continue to be closely identified with progressive thought and action, both on the national and the international front. Documentary has never accepted any political labels, and has never identified itself with any political party. This has not prevented it from being accused from time to time of being pillarbox red, or, on the other hand, of being the lackey of big business and monopoly capital. It has survived both accusations because both are false.

But the implications of the present anti-Communist panic—and they are possible implications, and no more than that—are somewhat disturbing. It is certainly alarming to read in a Times leader (approving the purge) a condemnation of Communism on the grounds that it is 'an international creed, dedicated to a crusade that overrides patriotism'. Shades of Nurse Cavell! Poor Sir John Boyd Orr! Poor Julian Huxley! Miserable Trygve Lie! And thrice, thrice miserable documentary film maker! The Times leader continues, 'the faithful and their camp followers cannot fairly expect to be trusted in positions of responsibility by the unbelievers who are in an overwhelming majority and who retain an impenitent, bourgeois preference for putting the country first'. Well now, we can all understand what the poor leader writer was trying to say in this particular context, and without the guiding hand of an editor like Barrington Ward; but that does not alter the fact that a Times leader writer should so allow himself to be panicked as to express, in any context whatsoever, so unfortunate a sentiment, a sentiment which, if acted on, would make it wise for most documentary workers to hand themselves over to their old colleague Detective Inspector Cain without more ado.

We do not in fact suggest that the situation is serious—yet. We do not in fact support either the Russian or the American thesis. But we do ask the film industry, and documentary in particular, to be extremely vigilant lest the creative and social urge tend to be engulfed in an undiscriminating political panic. Thus, having ourselves looked under the bed for a moment, we beg others not to do it for too long; too protracted a scrutiny may reveal something very unpleasant; cracked, and without a handle.

### NOTES OF THE MONTH

### The New Films Agreement

TALKS TAKING place between the Board of Trade and leading Hollywood representatives over the future of American films in Britain ended at the beginning of March in a compromise. Briefly, this agreement, covering a period of four years, guarantees Hollywood a minimum annual remittance of 17 million dollars, plus a sum equivalent to the amount earned by British films in America. The money earned by Hollywood films over and above this total, which will probably be some 10-12 million pounds judging from past figures, will remain in this country, and its use will be regulated by a Joint Committee of the British Government and the Motion Picture Association of America. Up to two and a half million pounds may be invested, in the first two years, in approved commercial or industrial undertakings, and a further sum may be used in encouraging the arts, but the greater part of this surplus will be directed into the British film industry itself, for financing the improvement of studios, the purchase of story rights, the production of films, and so on. In return for this agreement the Government has withdrawn the 75 per cent import tax on American films.

Under this agreement the actual dollars which Hollywood will be taking out of this country will be only a little more than was envisaged under the import tax, and there is some incentive to Hollywood to promote the showing of British films in America, since they will be able to take out extra money accordingly. On the other hand, Hollywood will be assured of at least four or five million a year, regardless of the quality of the films they send us, and however the distribution of British films increases in the USA they cannot earn dollars, as Hollywood remittances will merely increase correspondingly. Financially speaking, therefore, the agreement is fairly well-balanced, but the section relating to the investment, mainly in the film industry, of the balance remaining in this country is not so attractive. While Hollywood will not be able to buy up British cinemas, at least not without the permission of the Board of Trade, it will be able to dominate production to an extent not possible in the past. The British film industry stands in urgent need of capital to finance production, but if this capital is to be drawn from American sources, there is a danger that it may mean the production in Britain of a large number of imitation Hollywood-type films, which could only lower the prestige of our technicians; and it may lead, too, to an even worse shortage of facilities available to the independent British producer. On balance, therefore, one can only view the whole agreement with the greatest concern.

The main interests in the British film industry gave the Government no real support in its negotiations with Hollywood, and no effective evidence of the promised increase in production, while the Secretary of the CEA in an article in the *Kinematograph Weekly* after the conclusion of the agreement complacently congratulated himself and his members on their success in getting the tax removed. The situation will not improve unless the industry itself shows a greater willingness in future to assist in stabilizing the national economy.

### Hamburg Film Society

THE HAMBURG FILM SOCIETY had its first showing on February 16th. The programme included Helmut Käutner's film *Unter die Brucke*, banned by the Nazis during the war, and *Song of Ceylon*. The Society is under the joint presidency of the Regional Commissioner and the Burgomeister, and is managed by a British and German committee. Membership of the Society is limited to 1,000 persons, of whom not more than 300 may be British. The aims of the Society are as follows:

- (i) The display, to a selected public, of feature and documentary films of outstanding artistic or historical merit, and in particular of such films made before 1933 in Germany and abroad and after 1933 abroad.
- (ii) The rapprochement of the film industry and the public.
- (iii) The exchange of ideas between members of the German film industry and the British.

### Young People's Film Club

IT is proposed to form a Film Club for London schoolchildren—mainly from secondary and public schools.

The idea is to encourage a critical appreciation and understanding for good films—educational, instructional and entertainment films of all nations.

The shows will in some cases be centred round topics (Life at Sea, Animal Behaviour, Planning of Cities past and present, etc., etc.). Short talks given by experts, will often introduce the films, and discussion will be encouraged. Good music, related to the films, will be played by the children in the interval.

Seven shows are planned at intervals of three to four weeks on Friday evenings. A subscription of 10s. is suggested for the season.

Headmasters of all secondary and public schools in the London area have been written to with a view to finding out how they feel about the idea and how many of their staff would wish to cooperate.

### Twenty-nine Years

H. BRUCE WOOLFE started life in the film industry 29 years ago when he founded British Instructional Films. Since then he has had more than a thousand films to his credit. On Wednesday, March 17th, he retired from the Chairmanship of the Association of Specialized Film Producers and that body gave a luncheon in his honour. *DFN* would like to add to that tribute in these columns and, on behalf of its readers and its Editorial Board, to congratulate Mr Bruce Woolfe on his long and outstanding service to the film industry. We hope that his name will continue to be connected with the trade for many years to come.

### **Shorts**

THE Minister of Education has appointed the following to be Governors of the Educational Foundation for Visual Aids: Sir Rolande Wall, MC (chairman), Dr W. P. Alexander, Mr J. Beddington, CBE, Sir Ifan ab Owen Edwards, Sir Henry French, GBE, KOB, Mr W. Griffith, Mr F. A. Hoare, Mr H. D. Hughes, MP, Mr S. H. Marshall, MP. Mr G. G. Williams, CB, deputy secretary to the Ministry of Education, will act as assessor to the Governors.

\*

GLASGOW HAS, by a majority of one vote, recommended the finance committee of its Corporation to investigate the question of civic cinemas. It is good to see advantage taken so quickly of the amendment to the Local Government Bill. They hope to concentrate on the cultural aspect of film shows and not to attempt to compete with the usual form of entertainment cinema.

\*

THE BFPA is allocating ten Film Fellowships among the studios—nine students will come from European countries and one from China. Shell Petroleum are also giving two. This is in agreement with the UNESCO proposals.

# Art and the People

Ьy

### Sinclair Road

A NEW DEAL for the arts is slowly taking shape in Britain, Sometimes development seems more by accident than design but the task is a difficult one. One cannot order and arrange the production and supply of paintings or music or even films, as simply as one can provide the manufactured goods which people need. At the same time there are a number of very practical steps that have to be taken. In the first place, the creative worker needs the financial support which will enable him to follow his trade. Second, he needs a direct and productive relationship with the public. The picture of the artist, living on coffee and crumbs in a garret writing or composing for himself alone stuff which no one else reads or hears, and who finally turns out to be a genius after a tubercular death, may be romantic, but it is utterly wrong. It is another symptom of a society which is out of joint. In an age of full employment everyone should be enabled to work, whether their skill is at the lathe, the loom, the easel or the camera, On the other hand, it is no good creating the financial and social conditions in which the artist can work, without ensuring at the same time that the public has easy and ready access to the results of his work. An attentive and responsive public is a key to the whole problem.

During the war years the number of people who went to the theatre and to concerts and who set foot in art galleries for the first time vastly increased. In the case of films too there was the beginning of a far more critical interest in what was being produced. At the end of the war the country was faced with the problem of giving this increased interest a more permanent framework. The Arts Council became an established body to develop music, arts and drama. Government sponsorship of films continued. There is much debate now about the further assistance which the Government must give to the film industry to allow film-making in Britain greater scope and opportunity. But again a practical problem arises. There is a lot that the State can do out of public funds to support the arts; but encouragement from the centre is useless without a genuine local response.

Till now local activity has been inhibited by a number of things. Principally local authorities have not had the statutory power to go into this very important section of local life. There have been a few exceptions. Under the Holidays-at-Home Campaign city councils had the authority to provide concerts and entertainments of all kinds, but only so long as the war lasted. Seaside towns have also been allowed to spend a little money on entertaining their visitors. But by and large there has in the past been no country-wide sanction for civic encouragement of the arts.

Now, the picture has been completely changed by the new Local Government Bill, which empowers local authorities to spend up to 6d. of the rates on arranging entertainments of all kinds. They can sponsor their own theatrical companies and orchestras, acquire or even build concert halls, theatres and cinemas. For the first time the power to provide the facilities for people to enjoy the arts is available in Britain.

In part these clauses in the Local Government Bill are an indictment of commercially provided entertainment which has failed in a number of respects to provide what is needed. In part it is a necessary development in the process of making educational and cultural facilities freely available to the public without whose interest and support there can be no real stimulus to the artist. And this is no idle phrase. If one looks back over the past one finds that solid public participation is an almost invariable condition of a period of artistic achievement.

The opportunities which the new Local Government Bill provides are clear. But will they be taken? A new order on the Statute Book particularly when it is one of this kind, depends to a very large extent for its success on the degree of popular response. In other words much of the initiative now rests with all the local voluntary groups in the country, on the institutes, on the drama, music and film and other societies, to see that their local council uses its new powers and uses them wisely. When one compares the present status of the various arts and entertainments, the fact that there are only 200 theatres in the country, even fewer concert halls, as against some 4,700 cinemas, indicates obvious priorities for action. On the other hand, the enormous preponderance of cinema facilities should not blind one to the limitations of the entertainment they provide. In fact, the commercial cinema offers only a very narrow choice of films. The vast majority of the public is not at present able to see films made by other countries apart from America. Nor is it able to see by any means all the films made in this country. The fate of documentary films trying to get the cinema distribution is the obvious example. The rapid post-war growth of the Film Society Movement which now numbers as many as 150 societies is an example of the demand. But film societies have consistently been hampered to their development, by lack of halls, lack of projectors, the cost and difficulty of getting films to show. It is at this point that local councils can help. They should see to it that no local film society is being hamstrung by lack of facilities. They may even go to the length of establishing civic cinemas to ensure a wider choice of film entertainment than is available commercially. They can even promote the production of films.

The pattern of what is needed and can be done is the same for the other arts as well. In all cases, too, it is up to those who have struggled against every kind of difficulty in building up local societies to see that their council gives the help and encouragement that is needed if the arts are to have their proper place in our national life.



A Still from The British-Are They Artistic?

In February an amendment was put before the House which may have far-reaching consequences in the world of civic education. Local Authorities, under the amendment to the new Local Government Bill, have been given the right to increase the rates by any amount up to sixpence in order to provide in their areas such facilities for music, drama and films as they may think necessary. 'DFN' has asked for opinions from a wide selection of Local Authorities—many of them are not, as yet, prepared to make any comments. We print all we have received to date and hope to hear from readers on this point which must be of vital importance to anyone living anywhere in these islands.

### ALEC SPOOR of the National Association of Local Government Officers sets the ball rolling with these observations—

TO ALL interested in good films, and good documentary in particular, the Local Government Bill now in its final stages in Parliament, is the most heartening thing that has happened since Sir Stephen Tallents gave Grierson and his boys their heads at the Empire Marketing Board in the late 'twenties. For, rightly used, the Bill can open the way to a great renaissance in the making, the showing and the appreciation of film

One clause empowers borough and district councils to provide theatres and cinemas, to give in them entertainments of any nature, and to subsidize those entertainments to the extent of the product of a sixpenny rate. Another empowers them to make, to join in the making, or to contribute to the cost of films about their work.

Here we have the opportunity, at one blow, to get fine documentaries made, and—what is surely even more important—to get them shown and appreciated.

Already one or two local authorities have made films about their work. Rotha produced A City Speaks for Manchester, Jill Craigie The Way We Live for Plymouth. Both are fine films—but A City Speaks has not been seen outside Manchester and one or two provincial towns, while The Way We Live was given a theatrical distribution only after the newspapers had kicked up a fuss over its suppression. Other local government documentaries have been seen only in the village hall—factory circuit of the COI.

Yet local government offers a tremendous and fascinating field for the film-maker. Its fight against squalor and disease; its struggle to replace our blighted slums with worthy homes and communities; its work in succouring the sick, the old, the blind, deaf and crippled; its efforts to bring education, culture and the opportunities of a fuller life to all-all these are the raw material of film, possessing, in the hands of the imaginative director, all the elements of drama, conflict, humour and living humanity. Many councils have wished to make them-but they have been prevented by lack of powers or, where they had the powers, by the reluctance of the commercial exhibitors to show the films they sponsored.

The Bill removes both those obstacles. There is now nothing to prevent a local council, or a group of councils, making films about their work—and getting them shown in their own cinemas.

Sixpence

# on the

# Rates?

Eventually, we may hope to have civic cinemas in every town in the country, ready—uninhibited by the prejudices of commercial exhibitors—to show good documentaries of every kind, to screen the best feature films of every country and every period in film history, to run courses in film appreciation, and to give special shows for local groups interested in films of a particular type, catering for the specialist as well as the general audience.

Such civic theatres will not be mammoth 'Super-Colossals' with organ and stage shows. They will be small, friendly, intimate places, with opportunities for meetings and discussions, focal points for local film societies, centres of intelligent local life, capable of developing a new, more critical, yet more appreciative film audience eager for new and more intelligent films.

Here is the opportunity. How far it will be seized depends upon our local councils—which, since it is we who elect them, means us.

# LAMBETH is well alive to the use of film in Civic Education—

IN THE past entertainments have been confined to band concerts and performances by concert parties, arranged by the Public Services Committee, in the Council's open spaces.

The Council's Public Relations Committee, formed about 18 months ago, embarked upon a policy of giving public shows of documentary films relating to local government and current affairs. These shows have been arranged in assocition with the Central Office of Information who have provided the films, projector and operator, the Council undertaking publicity and general administrative details.

Our experience might be summarized as follows:

- (a) The films are invariably well received. A programme of four or five documentaries does not seem too 'heavy going'. The shows have been particularly popular among old people, some of whom expressed a preference for this type of film over a feature film.
- (b) An informal discussion on the films is usually welcomed after the show, and invariably produces intelligent criticisms and suggestions.
- (c) Audiences only build up in number slowly. We had audiences of 20-30 at our early shows but these have now increased to 100 or more. Dates, however, should be chosen carefully. We have distributed our shows all over the Borough,—a local 'clash' of dates has a disastrous effect on numbers.
- (d) It has been found a good plan to offer shows to local organizations, letting them make the necessary arrangements. Such shows are

usually open to the public, and may be advertised, but an *interested* nucleus c audience is ensured.

The Council have recently acquired a projecto of their own but no detailed decisions have ye been made as to how it will be used.

The main difficulty about the provision of other types of entertainment is the lack of suit able accommodation. The only premises suitable for an orchestral concert, for example, are the local theatre, which is expensive and not large enough. However, the Public Relations Committee are at present considering the possibility of providing one or more such concerts in spite of these difficulties.

The question of the extent to which the Coun cil will use the wider powers allowed under the new Bill has not yet been considered, but again premises are a difficulty.

EALING has been to the fore in local enterprise. They have had special measures passed to enable them to run their own theatre and they lose no opportunity to present culture to their people—

LOCAL GOVERNMENT is losing many of its power for the practical administration of the local ser vices, and if the spirit of democratic dealing i to be kept alive in the lesser authorities, othe likely branches of activity must be explored.

The publicizing of the work of the loca Council, the production of local guides and news sheets, the holding of civic exhibition and the dissemination of information on allocal matters has already been undertaken be many authorities, principally with a view to reawakening the civic consciousness of the citizens or townspeople, not as is commonly supposed simply to justify the rate demand.

Having sufficiently disturbed the prevalen apathy and aroused the enthusiasm for local matters in at least a small percentage of th electors, local Councils must have a prepare plan showing to what end the energy of thes townspeople may be turned. I suggest that determined cultivation of the Arts is sufficientl important to warrant the interest and patronag of any local authority. By that I do not mea merely the opening of an art gallery museum, or the formation of a municipal or chestra. Most existing art galleries bespeak no cultivation but incarceration of art. A local art committee must cultivate the talents of thos townspeople who might otherwise be 'born t blush unseen'.

In local social and cultural activities are t be found the true riches and fullness of livin



Ealing's Theatre

and it is to extend to every citizen the opporunity of discovering this for himself that these activities should be fostered by the local authoity. Amateur dramatics are usually tolerated n a kindly fashion because for the most part hey are confined to makeshift and inadequate acilities of presentation. Nothing succeeds ike success and, given a modicum of support rom statutory sources, many amateur dramaic societies would flourish into stable independence. Success begets enthusiasm and enthusiasm is infectious. If the various local cultural societies each received a measure of support from the local council, the resultant success of each would be more participants in, and less spectators of, the passing parade.

If local authorities will adhere to the principle of 'fulfilling a local need' I can foresee no possibility of a clash between them and commercial entertainment, nor any waste of the

ratepayers' money.

### BATH runs its Festival in May

These questions are posed by the Spa Director of Bath. The answer to them will, we hope, become clear in the next few months. We invite our readers to join in the discussion,

BATH, like certain other resorts, has had special powers for a long time by means of a Private Bill to organize entertainments and publicize attractions. In fact Bath was the first resort in this country to have a regular season orchestra and that was started in the year 1709. The introductions of powers to all local authorities to run their own theatres whilst in its broad aspect, seeming to be of value generally to people of all towns, will bring many problems.

Will municipalities be able to enter into direct competition with private management of theatres in the booking of plays? Will the proposals increase the number of touring theatrical companies and tend to lower the standard?

Will there be a tendency to increase output in the film world and will this lower the standard of film production? What chance of survival will a municipal cinema have in view of intensive competition?

Will it lead to nationalizing of the industry? Could any nationalized art be a success?

People nowadays even in small towns want the best entertainment. Will the powers under this Act give them the best?

### LIVERPOOL has a corporation which owns its Philharmonic Hall. They passed a local amendment in 1936-

THE amendment to the Local Government Bill enabling local authorities to organize their own theatres, cinemas, and concerts, is not likely to be of immediate interest to the Liverpool Cor-

A clause in the local Act of 1936 gave the Council powers which fell short of the new amendment only by the omission of authority to provide cinema entertainment. The use made of these powers would appear to indicate that the city is not dissatisfied with the commercial forms of entertainment available to citizens.

The two principal municipal ventures have been in the fields of music and open-air entertainment, and here the city has offered the public opportunities for enjoying cultural entertainment which could scarcely be practicable on a commercial footing.

The Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, one of Britain's finest concert halls, is owned by the Corporation and its use is granted to the Philharmonic Society and Orchestra under an agreement by which the Society receives an annuity of £4,000 on condition that a specified number of concerts are available at reasonable prices. Last year, the Society received a further £4,000 from the Corporation, largely on account of losses sustained after a full season which included a number of first performances.

The Parks and Gardens Committee have for some years developed an interesting programme of open-air music and drama which has ranged from Punch and Judy shows to Opera. An open-air theatre has been built in Calderstones Park, and last summer amateur societies were invited to provide a season of plays which attracted a large public.

Ownership of the Philharmonic Hall, which is equipped with the most modern sound film apparatus, has enabled the Corporation to assist to some extent in the presentation of documentary and artistic films. The Merseyside Film Institute Society receive preferential terms for the use of the Hall, and their regular showings are usually assured of capacity houses.

ST PANCRAS is one of the most advanced of all the London boroughs. This interesting summary tells of the work they have done and are doing and suggests ways in which they may profit from their new powers—

What has been done in the past re films and the arts?

- 1. For the past twelve years the Education and public Libraries Committee of the Borough Council has carried out 'extension activities' both for adults and children. These are tabulated below:
  - (i) Adult. Weekly talks throughout the winter, by prominent individuals in various fields. These talks make use of films where they are appropriate, e.g. Frances Pitt and her nature
  - (ii) Special three-cornered discussions in the Assembly Hall of the Town Hall, e.g. Arnot Robertson, Straus and Hadfield on 'Good and Bad Books'; Stephen Williams, Macqueen-Pope and Val Gielgud on 'The Theatre'.

(iii) Parents' evening in 'Book Week'.

- (iv) Play-reading groups meeting weekly in two of the Libraries.
- (v) Discussion groups and listening circles are, at present, being organized at other Branches. (vi) Summer concerts in the Council's gardens and open-spaces.
- (i) Children. 'Book Week' is held each year (see special pamphlet).
- (ii) Talks to children weekly throughout the winter (see pamphlets).
- (iii) Play-reading circles are held weekly at several of our Children's Libraries.
- (iv) Radio Listening Circles are also held.
- (v) The Children's Librarians give regular 'story hours' throughout the year—during the winter, in the Library; during the summer, in the gardens.
- (vi) At 'Children's Corner', our main Children's Library, a very active Puppet Circle has been formed. A group of children are making puppets and clothing them; another group are writing and studying puppet plays, and how to produce them. Eventually, the Circle will present its own plays, using puppets made by its members.
- (vii) An International Correspondence Group is also held at 'Children's Corner'. The children conduct a regular correspondence with other children's libraries all over the world.

- 2. Pamphlets describing adult and children's lectures are enclosed.
- 3. In 1946, the Borough Council sponsored the formation of the St Pancras Arts and Civic Council which co-ordinates cultural

(Continued foot column 1, page 47)

### NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Rhodesia—Is this your Country? G.B. Instructional for Southern Rhodesia Government. Written and directed: Alastair Scobie. Photography: James Allen, Frank Goodliffe and Ronald Shears. Editor: Oscar Percival. Distribution: Non-T. 16 and 35 mm.

Theme. This is a film for emigrants, giving them an idea of the kind of opportunity in Rhodesia awaiting the skilled man or the man with capital.

Comment. If the prospective immigrant notices nothing lacking in the content of this humdrum, superficial survey of a robust country, then it is likely that he is the kind of man for whom Rhodesia is looking. According to the film, Rhodesia offers sunshine, sport, plenty of food (and drink), no irksome chores (there is plenty of native labour to do all these), and a comparatively high standard of living (for the white man) to anyone prepared to work hard and ask no questions.

But the discerning emigrant will spot a number of awkward things: that the enormously greater native population is confined to much less than half the area of the country: that, in spite of attempts in the film to cover it up, a suburban snobbishness emerges only too clearly: and, above all, that pursuits of the mind are wholly ignored—worse still there is no evidence in the film that anyone recognizes their absence.

Creatures of Comfort. Realist for British Gas Council in association with Film Centre. *Producer*: Brian Smith. *Director and camera*: Alex Strasser. *Music and Effects*: Horace Somerville. *Commentary*: David Tree. *Distribution*: B.G.C. non-T. 18 mins.

THE thing which strikes one most about a high percentage of the Realist films is the wealth of

visual imagination employed. One can usually see what the director has been trying to do and can see, too, that he has spent a great deal of time and thought and enjoyed himself in the process. Creatures of Comfort is a good example. It points a sly finger at the notorious discomforts of the English house. The quaintness but impracticality of the plumbing. The draughts that whistle round the back of one's neck while one's legs are being roasted by the fire. The film also gives a clear exposition of the principles which should be respected in heating and ventilating a house. Builders please note! The visual illustrations which are used to bring the story home are vivid and amusing. The commentary, too, has a dry humour. But the laugh in the end was on your reviewer, he went home after seeing the film to find the pipes in his own house well and truly frozen.

Town Rats, Crown for Ministry of Food through COI. *Director*: Geoffrey Innes. *Camera*: William Chaston. *Sound*: Jock May. *Commentary*: Deryck Guyler. *Distribution*: CFL. 20 *mins*.

Theme. The habits of rats and how a local ratcatching department uses its knowledge of these to rid a small area of these pests.

Comment. The modern rat appears to have no musical appreciation; so the problem of ridding a town, or even a small part of a town of its unwelcome and dangerous rat population is far more complex than that which faced the 'de-rodentator' of Hamelin. Today, a local authority approaches its rat menace much as Scotland Yard combats crime—with investigators, catchers and even an information room, complete with map of recent outbreaks. Not unexpectedly, however, the methods of catching the four-footed criminals are very different,

and it is doubtful if some of the scenes in this film would find their parallel in a film of our police force.

The film is commendably clear and free from any pretence of being other than a straightforward account of a local problem and its local solution. That it chooses to localize its story is, perhaps, a disadvantage because it makes the rout of routs seem, if not easy, at least practicable; which from all reports is neither the case regionally nor nationally. This aspect aside, Town Rat should encourage people to use the organization at their disposal and so help to keep within bounds a far greater menace than most people imagine.

Much patience must have gone into the making of this film. The unit is to be congratulated on having got such lifelike (and death-like) performances from the main characters.

Your Children's Sleep. Realist for Ministry of Health through COI in association with Film Centre. Written and produced: Brian Smith. Directed: Jane Massy. Music: William Alwyn: Camera; A. E. Jeakins.

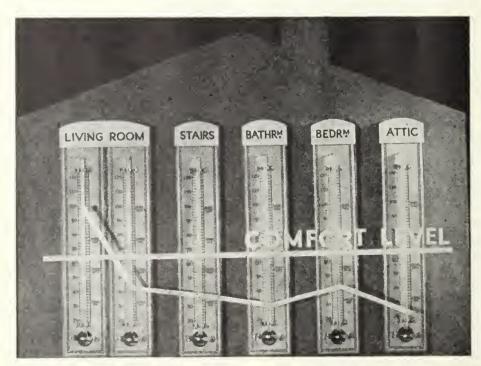
Theme. Why children can't sleep if they don't, and what they do with it if they can. Comment. There are all too many films these days which it is impossible to see without yawning, but the one film that might be expected to have a yawn in it is singularly free of any such effect. Your Children's Sleep steps out very firmly with the right foot almost before the opening titles are off the screen, so arousing the sympathy and interest of the audience from the outset. It carries these to the end of its friendly, simple account of typical children and some of their problems of sleeping and not sleeping. Imaginatively made, with a warmly human commentary, this is another of Realist's excellent series of first-rate broadly educational films which deserves to be shown everywhere.

Space forbids the fuller review this film most certainly merits.

They Travel by Air. Public Relationship for British Overseas Airways in association with Film Centre. *Director*: Richard Massingham. *Camera*: J. Burgoyne-Johnson. *Editor*: John Waterhouse. *Script*: Tony Roberts. *Music*: W. Lambert Williamson.

Theme. A demonstration to the staff of BOAC of the importance of courtesy and control when dealing with air travel passengers.

Comment. To say simply that this is a staff demonstration film is perfectly true. It is, however, as a piece of film-making, very much more than that. It contains in great abundance that quality so rare in the documentary cinema, the quality of intelligent humour. Dr Richard Massingham, whose work is so well known to us, has done his job—the job of persuading BOAC stewards and attendants that the passenger is always right -sincerely and thoroughly. And he has also succeeded in making the lesson extremely funny. From casting to cutting it is a gem. He has picked out the awkward people so familiar, the truculent and the talkative, the nervous and the nagging, and has handled them so well that they scarcely know we are laughing at them. And if, as usual, he appears in the film himself, he surely has every right because he is the best actor of the lot.



Creatures of Comfort

### THIS MODERN AGE

No. 16

The British-Are They Artistic?

Theme. A discussion on the cultural life of the people of this country, and their reactions to drama and the arts.

Comment. This is surely a subject offering vast scope for the imaginative documentary producer, but, regretfully, we feel that he has ended up a little breathlessly, just after the boat has left. It is a very good attempt. The great strides made in all forms of culture during the war are dealt with well, and considerable effort has been taken to give us a fair cross-section of contemporary opera, ballet, and so on. Are we as a nation artistic? The question is scarcely answered. But there is an uptilted-nose atmosphere about the film which gives a slightly uncomfortable impression of snobbery. One can miss Albert Herring at Glyndebourne or Checkmate at Covent Garden without being a complete intellectual moron, while according to the film the alternative is the pornographic peepshow. This, of course, is absurd. But the middle course of the ordinary entertainment of the people is not there. That vast happy medium which provides the relaxation for the millions seems to fall into a valley not penetrated by the Modern Age cameras. While for some obscure reason the legitimate theatre as most of us know it is virtually ignored.

We hear some good sense from Norman Collins on the problems of the present-day book publisher and from Robert Donat on the future of the cinema. There is also an interview with C. B. Cochran, the substance of which has completely escaped us, but which left no particular impact on first hearing other than a disturbing inconsistency on the part of the recording which positively gave to C.B. a dual personality.

But there is a point of criticism about which we feel strongly. And this is common to the whole series of This Modern Age. The narration is undeniably bad. Not only has the commentator a voice lacking in all vigour and a delivery which is monotonous. But there is the impression that it has been recorded in a telephone box. This is a point of criticism which deserves the attention of the producers. The series is an important one. The subjects are usually absorbing and the messages behind them forthright and refreshing. If it is to be a British March of Time-and the comparison is meant to be a compliment—then those behind it must realize that the commentary is just as important as, and probably a whole lot more important than, the visuals. The narrator must mean what he is saying, and say it as though he means it. Just now he sounds as though he might be reading the prices in a seed catalogue.

### No. 14

### Jamaica Problem

THE development of self-government in the Colonial areas was speeded up considerably during the war years. In the case of Jamaica a



Land Short of People

new constitution was granted in 1944 on the English parliamentary pattern with universal adult suffrage, although local politicians make capital out of the fact that ultimate power still rests with the Governor. But the crucial problem remains an economic one. There is still little or no industry and the prosperity of the country is geared almost entirely to the uncertain prospects of one or two crops, principally bananas. Any failure in the harvest or the market means poverty for the island. Economic development is therefore the overriding concern of the Jamaicans.

This Modern Age has presented the picture honestly and well. One thing only it fails to make clear enough—the equivocal nature of the local leader, Bustamente, whose campaign for full sovereign rights has more in keeping with the antics of South American dictatorships. Power rather than the economic and social development of the island appears to be the principal motive of this demagogue who dominates the local scene.

Visually, the film is effective. The unsettling orgiastic undercurrents in Jamaican life are well illustrated by the jivings of a local priest and his servitors as they initiate a new member of the flock. The same uncontrolled emotional fervour goes of course into the frenzied support of Bustamente. The commentary, however, generally lacks punch. One could imagine The March of Time making more of the visual material by a better choice of words or more subtle inflection. Nevertheless the film is a valuable addition to the picture which This Modern Age is building up of the pattern of development within the Commonwealth and Colonial Empire

### No. 15

### Land Short of People

Theme: Round a continent in twenty minutes. Comment: To have told our ancestors that one day people sitting more or less comfortably in arm-chairs could have the experience of getting to know a continent in less than half an hour would have evoked a forthright 'Impossible!' This film does little to confound such an opinion, for in covering so much ground already familiar to many people it misses the chance of probing more deeply into Australia's problems and opportunities. A young and vital country like Australia deserves a less superficial survey than this.

And why must the commentator shout?

### They Travel by Air (contd.)

This film emphasizes what has for some time been something of a puzzle. Dicky Massingham can put ordinary people doing ordinary things in front of the camera so that they are really amusing and entertaining as ordinary people can be. How is it that he has not been snatched up by the feature boys? Good fun is so missing in British feature films that one would think there would be room there for someone whose wit and sense of cinema are obviously so beautifully balanced. Still, why should we grumble? But Massingham has been long enough at the staff training film game, with its limited opportunities and relatively minor exhibition. It is high time he took a header into a much more ambitious field.

# Films and the National Coal Board

by H. K. Lewenhak

when the National Coal Board was set up it could not go ahead and create a brand new industry of its own; it had to work with and on the materials it had taken over. The same is true about the National Coal Board's film side. It, too, inherited a number of readymade films and an incomplete film programme, together with a number of established connections. So, in formulating its film policy, the Public Relations Branch of the Board at no time had the ideal and idyllic opportunity of sitting down before a clean plate. In formulating its own film programme, it had to adapt and to make do.

From the past, it took over a number of good popular instructional films which had been made under private enterprise and which, apart from being somewhat out of date from the technological point of view, did give the layman some idea of how a mine worked. We continued with these films and they were widely shown by Recruitment Officers, also forming the main items on the programme of our Mobile Cinema Vans. Valuable experience with these daylight vans as recruiting media had been gained while operating under the Ministry of Fuel and Power, and on this basis the campaign with them was continued and expanded. From the Ministry of Fuel and Power the Board also inherited a number of straightforward training films and one or two uncompleted documentaries.

For the first nine months of their official existence, the Board also continued to operate under the Ministry of Fuel and Power's vote with the Central Office of Information, who made films for the NCB cost free, as an Allied Service. It was, however, open to the Board to commission any other films outside their arrangements with the COI, provided they bore the cost themselves. The Ministry vote ended in September, after which time the Board, like any other industrial sponsor, had to pay for all the films they commissioned. Limiting this, however, it was decided that, as recruiting to the mines is a question of national policy, all direct recruiting films should be made for the Board by the Ministry of Labour through the Central Office of Information.

Out of this tangle of half finished films, previous commitments, etc., an attempt was and is being made to hammer out a comprehensive film policy.

Before any film is commissioned, we take great pains to get quite clear to whom exactly the film is to speak and exactly what we want it to say. This may not be a startling innovation, but has often been omitted in the past.

The most important of all is the question of distribution. What sort of distribution is desired is determined, to some extent, by the audience we are aiming at—tempered by the kind of distribution we can actually hope to get. A great deal of thought and time is spent on this question of distribution, because we wish to avoid the trap of making films and then finding, as has too often happened, that there is no ready means of getting them shown. Our film policy had a very definite eye to the market.

We also found that working backwards, as it were, from audience and distribution, gave us a much clearer idea of exactly what kind of film we wanted.

Our films have to fulfil a number of distinct and separate tasks: there are the films which are intended to inform the general public about mining, its problems and the progress being made to overcome them. Secondly, there are the films intended primarily to recruit men to the industry, and thirdly, the training and industrial morale films for within the industry itself

These are three distinct functions, but films and film audiences cannot be divided into watertight compartments. For example, the miner, as a member of the community, obviously sees the film in which you are informing the lay public about the industry, and the way he features in such a film has an obvious effect on his morale. Similarly, films that are intended to be purely informative also have a recruiting 'bye-products', and so on. So that, while one's principal aims in films remain clear cut and separate, one has also got to see that the separate sectors are kept in line.

For internal consumption, in addition to the training films, the Coal Board have started an industrial newsreel for which theatrical distri-

bution has been achieved in cinemas in mining areas. The aim of the reel is to keep the miner informed of developments in his own industry and to widen his sense of community from that of his own particular locality to the whole community. We have also tried, with some success, to interest Colliery Consultative Committees—the present descendants of the wartime Pit Production Committees—in our films, with the result that they are being shown in Miners' Welfare Halls, etc.

We have made mistakes. The miner is a highly discriminating filmgoer, and we have received copies of Colliery Committees' Minutes, 'deploring the poor technical standard' of one or other of our earlier efforts. Such discrimination is, perhaps, one of the most encouraging features of the work. It means that the film producer working for such an audience need not fear that his finer nuances are being wasted on an insensitive audience.

Films are expensive. The Coal Board is not a Government Department, with access to public funds, but a trading public corporation. The cost of all its films must be charged against revenue. It is against this rigorous financial background that the films are proving, and must increasingly prove, their effective worth to the industry.

# A Musician's Approach to the Documentary Film

by William Alwyn

A FUNDAMENTAL principle of artistic creation is that the artist should work within the limits of his medium. His expression is conditioned by his tools. The small canvas demands the miniaturist's approach—the Sistine Chapel, the grand manner. These limits may not only be defined by purely artistic requirements but by the more urgent and practical limitations of purse, the availability of suitable canvas and a possible world shortage in camel-hair. It is imperative in the musician's approach to the film that he should have a clear realization of the scope of his medium—that he should cut his coat according to his cloth and his clothing coupons.

In the early days of Documentary the composer had a very clear idea of the conditions of his work; conditions imposed by a limited budget, the experimental nature and size of the recording theatre, and the imperfections of recording gear and reproduction. The budget for music was usually in the nature of pocketmoney and this naturally conditioned the size of orchestra; some instruments did not record well, and this conditioned the type of orchestra. But most important of all, the composer, together with the producer and director, realized that he was pioneering in the use of the sound track, that the field for experiment seemed

boundless and he had a firm appreciation of the basic fact that the sound track should be a unification of commentary, sound effects and music. To mention but two of the early documentaries, Song of Ceylon (music by Walter Leigh) and Night Mail (music by Benjamin Britten), is to realize that in both cases composer and director were working with a complete understanding of the restrictions of their medium; working within its limits, and working with the enthusiasm of pioneers with fresh fields to plough. These films are over ten years old, yet by virtue of the intelligence of the technical approach they are vital and contemporary today, whereas the feature film of the period is too often a museum piece.

Any art that depends on mechanism for its expression is bound to progress towards mechanical perfection (e.g. the art of flying, from the hazardous contraptions of the Wright brothers to the jet-propelled super-sonic plane of today). Ten years in the art of film music has led us from castles in the air to Cameron Castle at Beaconsfield, and by slow stages to Stage I at Denham. Better recording theatres lead to better reproduction; better music recording leads to bigger and better orchestras. One by one the mechanical limitations have been

(Continued page 47)

### Ross McLean

a Close-Up

Ьу

### Alan Field

THE GENTLEMAN whose classic features distinguish this page is Mr Ross McLean, Film Commissioner of the National Film Board of Canada and spiritual leader of the largest single documentary film, graphics and visual aids agency in the known world. Today the National Film Board which Mr McLean heads has 600 employees, sends its films and graphics materials to more than 35 countries, operates its own national non-theatrical circuits and has produced in its seven years of existence more than 2 700 films.

About this job of running a two and a half million dollar enterprise, Ross McLean has the following to say: 'Films of every kind whether entertainment, educational or documentary have a terrific impact upon people. It is our responsibility jointly with film makers everywhere to see that some assuagement of the savagery of modern life is made possible by people who realize the full potential of film.'

The present healthy state of the Film Board, its wide range of activity and its personnel bear lasting witness to the influence and initiative of John Grierson who was Ross McLean's predecessor as Canadian Film Commissioner. Comparison between the first and second Film commissioners is invidious. A more profitable speculation could be made upon the qualities required to head the National Film Board.

Obviously the Film Commissioner must be capably an administrator. He must know his nation, his people and their history; he must understand the social and economic topography of his country. He must possess, above all, a political 'nous' in addition to that discursive reason which the Platonists called 'logos'. With understanding and knowledge must go sympathy and respect for creative undertakings in the public good. In these capacities Ross McLean is abundantly gifted and in the balance sheet it can be fairly said that there was on the native horizon no other person singularly fitted for the job.

If Britain is the spawning ground for the documentary idea, Ross McLean is the link in the chain which anchored that idea in Canada. It was Ross McLean who first proposed that John Grierson be invited to Canada to survey the Canadian position in the light of the British documentary development. The meeting between Grierson and McLean took place in December 1935 when the GPO was recovering from the birthpangs of Night Mail. Basil Wright, Cavalcanti and Evelyn Spice were present for that occasion. No tablet as yet marks the historic site of that meeting but one might justifiably be erected.

At that time a Government film establishment did exist in Canada—the Motion Picture Bureau—which began its work in 1924, flourished during the silent days of film and fell upon evil times in the early 'thirties. The emergence of a full-accoutred British documentary found the Motion Picture Bureau struggling



with subtitles dealing with moose and goose. Ross McLean's proposal led Grierson to Canada and the evolution of the National Film Act of 1939 with the Scottish film master installed as the first Commissioner.

Four hundred crises and two thousand films later, Grierson resigned in October 1945. Ross McLean had meantime become successively Assistant Film Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner by 1943, Acting Commissioner at Grierson's resignation and finally, in January 1947, was appointed to head NFB. It is interesting to note that the Order-In-Council authorizing the appointment was sent with the personal congratulations and best wishes of the Prime Minister of Canada.

Background to this drama begins in Ethelbert, Manitoba, where Ross McLean was born 42 years ago. Recently an Ottawa journalist pleading for more adequate rail facilities for the region described Ethelbert as 'the birthplace of many famous Canadians—including Ross McLean, the Film Commissioner'. Despite the alleged lack of transportation, Mr McLean cut a swathe through schools of the prairie lands like a 16 ft. reaper-thresher.

Graduating from the University of Manitoba with BA in modern history, at the tender age of 21 he was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship and journeyed to Balliol for a sojourn amongst the Oxonians. Documentary seeds were implanted when he became the first holder of the Beit senior research scholarship and wrote a thesis on the social consequences of emancipation in Trinidad and British Guiana. Mr McLean's thesis found certain flaws in that emancipation.

After receiving his BLitt at Oxford there followed a session of special work for the Unemployment Relief Commission of Illinois. In 1932 he was national secretary of the Association of Canadian Clubs, the organization which has played an important part in the growth of an informed national expression. At the time of meeting Grierson, Mr McLean was stationed in Britain as secretary to the Rt Hon Vincent Massey, former High Commissioner for Canada to the United Kingdom.

With the inception of the National Film Board, Ross McLean was one of its three originals—the others being Grierson and Janet Scellen. Stuart Legg was then liaison at the old Motion Picture Bureau. From the first McLean's skill in negotiation, his wide knowledge of government and the personalities of government were invaluable in getting NFB established and working. In those early days after 1939 he both directed and produced films.

The healthy, active and widening scope of NFB's work is the best testimonial of Ross McLean's stewardship. He has welded its manifold activities into a more co-operative whole; he has raised standards of production in film and graphics; he has shown enterprise and insight in initiating new programmes. To the strong tree that Grierson planted he has added his own mature and civilizing influence.

Of the future of the National Film Board he says: 'NFB has a special function as a pilot plant in terms of ideas and the adaptation of ideas and somehow or other those ideas must help to add to the common understanding and the enlargement of compassion among people.'

### Why Scientific Film Societies?

Ьy

James W. Oswald

THE QUESTION 'What is a scientific film?' has begun to rank with the famous 'What is Truth?' and attempts at definition of either are equally elusive. Here, a new question is offered for answer—'Why scientific film societies?' Why has interest in scientific and documentary films increased so rapidly during the past ten years?

In 1938, the first scientific film society—the London SFS—was formed by enthusiastic members of the Association of Scientific Workers. 1948, ten years later, is a suitable point at which to pause and take stock. Arising directly from this small beginning came the Scientific Film Association which has gained a world-wide prestige and reputation making it the recognized authority on all aspects of the use of scientific films. The past decade has been one of great progress but let no one, however lofty his aspirations for the future, ever forget that the scientific film societies were responsible for starting the movement.

In this same ten years, a number of new societies have been formed and 43 are now affiliated to the Scientific Film Association. From a total membership of 260 in 1938, the film society audience has grown to approximately 10,000 in 1948. This figure takes no account of the occasional shows put on by scientific and other bodies in connection with their general activities. It is of interest to see what sort of composition the scientific film society audience has and speculate on the reasons for their presence. Some societies, such as those formed in Government departments, have a restricted membership but many are open to anyone. The London SFS is such a society and in 1945-46 carried out an analysis of the professions of its members. The professions were classified under four main headings-1. Scientific (chemists, physicists, engineers, etc.); 2. Technical (filmworkers, laboratory assistants, etc.); 3. Education (teachers and students); and 4. Non-scientific (clerks, typists, accountants, etc.). This classification may have been somewhat arbitrary but the results of analysis of some 800 members' professions gave the following results:

Scientific 40 per cent Technical 15 per cent Education 20 per cent Non-scientific 25 per cent

It is probable that the scientific and technical sections do not expect to learn a great deal that is new in their own subjects, but want to know what the other fellow is thinking and doing. The chemist wants to find out how the engineer is tackling his particular problems, the engineer is interested in the activities of the physicist. The scientific film society provides a valuable centre for keeping scientists in touch with the many and varied aspects of subjects with which they are not in daily contact. Films are being used to a greater extent than ever before for educational purposes and if only for this reason, those concerned with teaching join scientific film societies to see what is available and form some idea of how the films may be used. It is more difficult to find reasons for the

presence of the quarter of the audience that has been given the label 'non-scientific'. Is it that there are 'mute, inglorious' Darwins and Rutherfords in the world of commerce? Is it that they cannot find the films they want in the local cinemas? The most probable reason is satisfaction of curiosity in wanting to know 'what makes the wheels go round'.

The scientific film society audience must not be confused with that to be found in the commercial cinema in that trance-like state engendered by the vapourings of Hollywood, Any society secretary will confirm that his members are wide awake and very critical of the films put before them. Probably the most common criticism is that the films are not 'scientific' enough. Although shots of cranes silhouetted against a background of steam may be aesthetically satisfying, they do not add to our knowledge of the cranes. It is treatments such as this that form the basis of such criticism. When one society showed Atomic Physics recently, there was such a flood of applications that the programme had to be repeated-an event unprecedented in the history of the society. Needless to say, there were no criticisms of this film being 'unscientific'.

Many societies have carried out audience re-

action experiments to find out what their members think of certain films. The results, although of interest, have a somewhat academic flavour in that they apply to the finished product only. It seems strange that no documentary producer has yet made use of this ready-made audience as a body of opinion on a film he has in the making. It would be a worthwhile experiment to take a scientific film society audience into his confidence from the start, explain what he is setting out to do and the lines on which he proposes to work. Let them see the bits and pieces of the film as it is being made and ask for criticism. This may seem a bold and new procedure but much valuable information might be obtained and here might be found a way to that freshness of treatment lacking in so many documentaries of today.

### COMPETITIONS

READERS apparently did not feel inspired to write to their cinema managers in COMPETITION No. 2. No entries were received. COMPETITION No. 4 will be a CLERIHEW on anything concerning the documentary film world. Entries before May 1st please.

# Trident Films Ttd.

is pleased to introduce Douglas Jackson, farmer and educationist, who has joined the firm as instructional adviser.

'Methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face'

Rosanne Brownrigg

H. Annesley Brownrigg

Marjorie Greenwood

Douglas Jackson

77 Dean Street, W.1

Gerrard 1458/9

# A Musician's Approach to the Documentary Film

(Continued from page 44)

sloughed and the musician now finds it possible to compose as for the concert hall with the knowledge that what he writes will be reproduced with mechanical fidelity. The danger is that, through this very perfection of music recording, the composer may be led into a state of self-sufficiency, and music for film thought of as a thing-in-itself, divorced from the unified sound track. (I don't say this is true, I am merely pointing to a danger signal.)

Again it becomes imperative that the composer for the documentary film should not lose sight of the limitations of his medium—and there are still limitations, not the least of which is the important problem of 16 mm reproduc-

tion If a documentary is made for non-theatrical release (and 16 mm reproduction), then it is no use shutting our eyes to the fact that certain types of music do not reproduce well on substandard film and, therefore, 16 mm imposes special limitations on the composer. What these limitations are, each composer must assess for himself. My own feelings are that sub-standard reproduction demands emphasis on melodic line (as opposed to 'colour' and 'effect' music), clarity and simplicity of treatment, and that this clarity is best achieved by a strict limitation of the size, and a nicer choice of the components of the orchestra. A few instruments will reproduce better than a large body—though, of course, the type and scope of the film itself poses its own problem. (The strict artistic functions of the use of music in

### Sixpence on the Rates?

(Continued from page 41)

education and social life of the borough. This Council, being a representative body working in conjunction with the Libraries Committee, was able to carry out activities for which the Borough Council then had no powers.

4. Films are used in the various series of talks which have been held; at exhibitions, etc, and screen trailers for advertising purposes.

What St Pancras intends to do in the future.

- 1. The Borough Council have accepted the powers under the LCC General Powers Act and are considering the question of themselves providing 'concerts and entertainments' as defined under the Act.
- The Arts and Civic Council will act in an advisory capacity, but will extend its activities in spheres which require closer contact with organizations in the borough. These include Community Clubs, a Music Group, Repertory Film Club, and the like.

What are general reactions and feeling towards Act?

A great step forward and one which was envisaged by the Borough Council when sponsoring the Arts and Civic Council. The Council can now perform those duties which, previously, it had no power to do.

any particular film demand primary consideration.) If the film requires bigness of treatment then by all means use a larger orchestra, but the scoring should be broad and clear—in line rather than in colour.

With the 16 mm film we are still in the experimental stage and personally I am all for experiment! The art of film music is a young art and still cries out for the spirit of adventure; 'Music, heavenly maid' is still a teen-ager. To sum up, let us avoid becoming stereotyped in our approach to film music: let us not forget that music is only a part of the sound track which ideally should be a fusion of the spoken or sung word, natural sound and sound effects —a vitally important part, but still a part; and let us realize, not only the limitations imposed by the film on music, but its still infinite and unexplored possibilities.

Postscript:

I cannot leave this question of the unification of the sound track without making these points,

- 1 Music should not be left to the last possible moment and added as an after-thought.
- The pursuit of the ideal sound track calls for much closer co-operation between the composer and the sound effects department.
- 3. Little can be achieved without careful planning. (A complex score such as that composed for Carol Reed's *Odd Man Out* was made possible because it was considered and discussed *before* the film went into produc-

tion. The same equally applies to such films as Rotha's World of Plenty or The World is Rich (music by Clifton Parker). The sound track for these films was the result of careful and patient planning in which all concerned, not least the composer, worked as a team from the earliest stages of scripting to the final stages of the dubbing session.)

### CORRESPONDENCE

From Australia:

sir: In your 'Notes of the Month', January, 1948, you say: 'Let's have your views and criticisms....'

I would very much like to see *DFN* printed in large type. The articles, news, film reviews, etc., are all most interesting, but to those of us in the Roaring 'Forties two or three pages is about all that can be managed at a sitting. Larger type, of course, means less printed matter; but it also means less eye-strain. We have all seen the film *Your Children's Eyes*; but what about some consideration for 'Your Readers' Eyes'.

Now that that growl is off my chest, here are some items which may be of interest:

The Film Society movement is fairly strong in NSW. There are about eight city groups and

(Continued on next page)

# INTERNATIONAL REALIST

NEARING COMPLETION

# GUN DOGS

COMMENTARY BY

# BERNARD MILES

BASIL WRIGHT

JOHN TAYLOR

F. P. MOYNA

### CORRESPONDENCE—contd.

several in country towns. A federation of NSW societies has been formed, with a view to getting more documentary and educational films into the country. There are dozens of excellent films on 16 mm stock available to UK audiences which are not in our libraries.

At the moment there seem to be as many 16 mm projectors in Sydney as there are films. In the Department of Education the ratio is 2½ films per projector, and with more schools putting in machines, the position is getting worse. A heavy blow to the 16 mm users is the closing of the Canadian Film Board library of 200 films. This is being done as an economy measure by the Canadian Government. What will happen to the films is the burning question? Probably they will go the same way as the US films when that library was closed last year; they went to the National Film Library at Canberra and are rarely seen now. Getting films out of the Canberra library is, to put it mildly, not easy. The only films available now in Sydney are the Documentary Film Council, UK local tourist offices and sponsored films from oil companies, etc. The position for the enthusiast is pretty grim.

To give an idea of the type of film society we have in Sydney, here are a few details of the Independent Film Group, to which 1 belong: membership 300, annual subscription 10s. Two screenings per month, usual attendance 150-180. Using two similar Australian-built Harmour and Heath projectors; members at least have no complaints on the technical quality of the screenings. All films are previewed by a programme committee—a highly necessary procedure.

Yours faithfully,

J. CLARKE

### Visual Units

SIR: In the article 'Open Letter from a Schoolteacher' (your January issue) we noted the following criticisms of Houses in History, one of the films shown at the Conference of Visual Units in Manchester.

'Someone in the discussion said that it wasn't a subject which was really suitable for a film and I must say I didn't like it very much-I wouldn't use it because I think my children would find it hard to follow and a bit dull.'

As the film unit responsible for making

Houses in History we feel we should like to reply to these observations.

- 1. No clear educational briefing was forthcoming from either the Ministry of Education or Ministry of Information at the time of commissioning, January 1st, 1945.
- 2. The film was designed as part of a visual unit without its producers having any working knowledge of, or say in, the remainder of that unit.
- 3. Alhough the subject expert, appointed by the Ministry of Education, and the producer and director agreed on the purpose and general scope of the film, they seemed always to be at variance with the Ministry of Information (and later the Central Office of Information).
- 4. The final commentary of the film was written by COI after a commentary had been carefully prepared by the film's makers, the subject expert and a practising teacher.

The COI consistently refused to call in the Ministry of Education until the final rough-cut stage with a completed commentary. Technically the film suffered from the changes that had to be made at that stage to meet the needs of the Ministry of Education. Obviously they should have been in from the start so that the original form of the film, once agreed, could be adhered to.

- 5. The Associate Producer was not appointed to the film until after it had been started.
- 6. Up to the date of this letter, the makers of the film have been given no opportunity of seeing (let alone commenting on) the complete visual unit, of which the film was only one part.
- 7. All during production, the COI and the Ministry of Education stressed the experimental nature of the project. We agree, An experiment of how not to commission an educational film or a visual unit.

It is particularly discouraging for units interested in such experimental work to find that the films we work so hard to produce in such difficult circumstances are so useless to the people who are eventually expected to use

Yours, etc.,

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# DOCUMENTARY

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INCORPORATING DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MAY 1948

ONE SHILLING



### Preamble . . .

'Impact on Film' is a name that will stick, perhaps because of its very awkwardness in these times of slick and meaningless titles.

Book I in the series is to be published shortly. It is not proposed here to present a list of well-known names: however, it can be pointed out that the essay by Dilys Powell, in which this critic surveys the nationality of films, and the specially contributed and illustrated article. 'The Script Comes to Life', on cartoons by the Halas-Batchelor team, are vital to every aspect of film polemic.

I am not of the opinion that 'IMPACT ON FILM' publications are bringing out 'the film books to end all film books', but I think that their merit will be obvious to the discerning, and not a little entertaining to those whose interest is of a more leisurely kind. J. Clifford King's visit to a Saturday Morning Children's Film Club, and the 'Portrait of Margaret Lockwood' by Marguerite Bruce, deliver the sting and the honey with persuasive zest.

Peter Probyn has designed our cover. John Tarr has designed our lay-out. With 32 pages, all Art, at 2 -, 'IMPACT ON FILM' is worth watching for.

Paul Sheridan Napier House, 24 High Holborn, London, WCI

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FROM OUR INDEX OF PRODUCTIONS

UNDER C: CHILDREN:—CHILDREN AT SCHOOL (BCGA), CHILDREN

GROWING UP WITH OTHER PEOPLE (COI), CHILDREN LEARNING

BY EXPERIENCE (COI), YOUR CHILDREN AND YOU (COI), YOUR

CHILDREN'S EARS (MOI), YOUR CHILDREN'S EYES (MOI), YOUR

CHILDREN'S MEALS (COI), YOUR CHILDREN'S SLEEP (COI), YOUR

CHILDREN'S TEETH (MOI).

All these films are available from the Central Film Library, except Children at School (1937) which is now out of circulation.

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# DOCUMENTARY film news

VOL. 7 NO. 65 MAY 1948

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The cover still for this month is from a new film Steps of the Ballet, which will shortly be released by Crown Film Unit

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### ROBERTO ROSSELLINI

NEARI Y twenty years ago the concept of putting real people and events on the screens of this country began to show its first practical results. The first documentary films opened the eyes of British cinema audiences to, among other things, the artistic possibilities of a medium which until then had been concerned principally with various versions of what the butler saw.

Many of those who witnessed these early interpretations of reality felt that at last the British cinema was beginning to find its proper material in the life and work, the hopes, fears and struggles of the common man. In the rugged, friendly, unfamiliar faces which the camera then scanned for the first time, there lay the strength and humanity from which the British cinema, it seemed reasonable to hope, might develop a power to move men's hearts as they have rarely been moved by any of the older arts. Here was a new medium of expression, popular in the most literal sense, which could worthily interpret the life which throbbed under the roof-crusts of our cities and in the quietness of our countryside.

Since those early years the British documenary film has gained an importance in our national life which has fully justified the soaring dreams of its founding fathers. On a scale which few could have imagined twenty years ago the moving picture has been turned to the service of the people, not only of this country, but of the whole Commonwealth, and it is certain that this progress has not reached its peak. The advance has not, however, been equally swift in all directions. Partly owing to the influence of the war, of all the potentialities which were latent in the initial documentary idea, the one which has developed most fully is that of public information. But the capacity to depict the life of the individual, ordinary man is the one which has progressed least from its rudimentary state, for although many films have been made in which all the participants have been men and women in the street, they have generally been treated as symbols of the mass, as puppets whose attitudes and gestures emphasize or prove a social point. Seldom has there been an attempt to portray the single, idiosyncratic individual who, with millions of other unique individuals, is the raw material of the mass. It is a matter of approach; the course followed with every justification by documentary film-makers until now has been to take a social problem and illustrate its effects and solution with the help of representative individuals. The alternative, equally justifiable, is to start with the human being in the round, his face, his gestures, his thoughts and the inflections of his voice, and set him in his surroundings, which include not only the pattern of his carpet and the view from his bedroom window but also the social situation in which he lives.

This trend of British documentary towards the treatment of institutions rather than people has spread wherever the documentary influence has spread, and the portrayal of the individual has been left to the feature and entertainment film-makers who, by and large, still seem only able to contemplate the perverted aspects of the present and the romantic aspects of the past. To find any proper screen study of mankind it is necessary to turn to the countries of Europe where people have been compelled to reconsider their approach to many subjects besides that of the cinema. The recent visit to London of Sr Roberto Rossellini was more than a date in the cinema's social calendar. It was the visit of a man who, by his will and inspiration, has probably come closer than any other active director to portraying our time in terms of its living participants. His most recent film, Germania Anno Zero, which has un-

(Continued at foot of page 50, col. 1)

### NOTES OF THE MONTH

### The British Film Institute

THE Report of the Government Committee of Inquiry into the British Film Institute has been issued after four months of evidence-taking (HM Stationery Office. 4d.). It redefines the Institute's objects as follows:

- (a) to encourage the development of the art of the film, to promote its use as a record of contemporary life and manners and to foster public appreciation and study of it from these points of view;
- (b) to explore and promote new or extended uses of the film:
- (c) to encourage, support and serve other bodies working in the same field.

Its recommendations, in brief, are that the Institute should concentrate on building up the National Film Library and establishing its own cinema, providing a first-class information service and setting up a regional organization to develop local film appreciation and activity. A rough estimate of the finance necessary is given as £100,000 to cover annual expenditure which is over three times the present grant, and £30,000 to meet capital expenditure.

Clarification of the Institute's purposes and some expansion of its work are therefore the main upshot of the inquiry. The proposal that the Institute should act as a central servicing agency for other organizations (giving grants, providing meeting places, projection facilities, secretarial help, etc.) is also valuable. Important, too, is the recommendation that the Governors should in future be appointed by the Government as individuals.

The great omission is a really inspiring lead to the Institute. The main proposals do little to break new ground. The initiative still remains with the other organizations which have grown up—film societies, specialist film users and film makers—to see that the Institute becomes the real centre and focus of all film interests and activities which it ought always to have been.

\*

### Education Foundation for Visual Aids

THE GOVERNORS of the Educational Foundation for Visual Aids have now appointed the new Director of the Foundation.

Dr Harrison is at present an Assistant Education Officer of Surrey County Council, in whose employ he has been since 1945, when

(Editorial contd.)

fortunately so far only been seen privately in this country, shows what tremendous forces may be released by this fresh approach.

Sr Rossellini's method is to put aside all the pretentious paraphernalia of conventional film-making. With the most limited technical means, and using for the most part real people in their real surroundings, he builds a picture of Berlin which shows, not how a stricken city is governed, fed, clothed and decontaminated, but how the people who remain there live and feel. He achieves, so to speak, a deeper reality towards which it is time our own realist film-makers turned their thoughts.

There are, of course, many ways in which film-making can be approached, and it would be unreasonable to suggest that the style which has carried British documentary so far towards the goal originally set for it should be abandoned, but it would be equally unreasonable to insist on dogmatic uniformity. There has recently been much criticism of the predicant dullness of many documentary films. Surely one of the surest methods of bringing our screens back to life is to turn our minds to the study of the ordinary man.

he was appointed as Assistant Education Officer for Further Education.

We are told that Dr Harrison has had considerable experience of the use of visual aids to education both in the Services and in civilian teaching. From 1931-45 he used visual aids almost continuously in all types of education. In 1938, while on a Carnegie Institute research scholarship in science, he visited many American schools, taking a particular interest in the use they made of visual aids. He has produced, and assisted in the production of, slides, film-strips and 16 mm films, and since 1945 he has been responsible for advising the Surrey Education Committee on the purchase of all types of visual aid equipment.

\*

### Documentary in Parliament

'CHARLEY', the new Halas-Batchelor creation, to whom our readers have already been introduced, has already got himself into Parliament. On May 13th there was a debate in the House of Commons about Government publicity services, with special reference to the Central Office of Information. COI films were mentioned when Mr Marlowe (MP for Brighton) questioned the 'vast sums' spent by COI and complained that few of the films were ever seen by the people. Mr Marlowe seemed perturbed that £30,000 was being allocated for six cartoons featuring 'Charley', to be made with the direct object of explaining to the people the workings and advantages of the new Government Acts—Housing, Health Bill, National Insurance, etc.

The artist who created 'Charley' has described him as 'a middleaged bloke, going bald, with a streak of optimism'. Mr Marlowe wished to know which of the gentlemen on the Treasury Bench was the model for this caricature!

We would respectfully advise Mr Marlowe and other honourable members to see one or two of the 'Charley' cartoons before making such sweeping criticisms—they might find them instructive, and they will certainly find them amusing. As for the general public not viewing them—well, they will be theatrically distributed *and* available very shortly from the Central Film Library.

Let us see more and not less of this type of film. The parable is still the easiest method of explanation—and 'Charley' can tell the story of our social changes better than any number of White Papers or pronouncements in the Press.

\*

### Wot! No Money

WE SENT our bright young man along to the British Council to attend the meeting which was arranged between Roberto Rossellini and the Press, when the Italian film director arrived in this country at the beginning of May. Unfortunately, however, Signor Rossellini was indisposed, and a member of the British Council staff undertook to answer questions. Our representative, not daring to return entirely empty-handed to the editorial staff, and noticing that in the hand-out issued beforehand by the British Council special reference was made to Signor Rossellini's interest in documentary films in Britain, inquired whether this might be taken to indicate a possibility of his making a similar type of film in Italy. The young lady behind the desk replied without hesitation: 'Oh, he always uses the documentary technique, Why, he hardly spends a penny.' The young man was later found wandering down Regent Street with a dazed expression on his face.

### Film in Europe

# German Feature Films

by

### Basil Wright

FILM makers in Germany are working under conditions of extreme difficulty. There are virtually no studios, apparatus is short. It is, on the whole, remarkable what has been achieved, apart from the French Zone, where it appears that no production has so far been undertaken. In the other three zones would-be producers must obtain a licence to make films from the occupation authorities, and must also obtain approval for each script before they go into production. The main laboratories (outside the Russian Zone) are in the British and US sectors of Berlin, in the American Zone at Munich, and in the British Zone are under discussion.

### Ingenuity

In the British Zone, incredible ingenuity has been exercised by German producers in converting all sorts of buildings—such as inns, village halls, barracks, ruined school-buildings—into reasonably efficient studios. But there is a natural tendency to script films for the maximum amount of location shooting, at least until the new stages at Göttingen are ready for use.

Ideologically, the eight films I saw during a short visit to the British Zone seemed to me to reflect firstly the confusion of the non-Nazi German mentality today, and secondly, the influence of the respective occupying authorities. Without entering into too dangerous a generalization, it could be said that the mental and psychological attitude behind some of the films is best summed up by those two untranslatable German words— Weltschmertz and Schadenfreude, which, in their post-war German setting, combine into a curious sort of self-pity which non-Germans find it difficult to appreciate or understand.

The problem of the German producer today is to find a way of getting something positive out of the prevailing mood of depression, either directly, or by turning their attention elsewhere (escapism). The tendency of the cinema-going public is to prefer the latter method to the former, which they call 'Trümmer'—(rubble)—films.

### Russian Zone

The best of the rubble-films is also one of the earliest—Mörder Sind Unter Uns (Murderers are among us) now showing in London. Not only is it a fine piece of film-making, but it also puts forward a positive viewpoint in terms of the rehabilitation of the principal character, who returns to active community service after a period of disillusionment. This film was made in the Russian Zone, and is very much better—ideologically—than two others from that zone, Irgendwo in Berlin (Everywhere in Berlin) and Elie im Schatten (Marriage in the Shadows). Irgenwo in Berlin begins well, but relapses into

profound sentimentality, the last ten minutes being exclusively devoted to a tear-jerking death-bed scene of a too-too angelic small boy. (There is an interesting comparison here with Rossellini's Germany Year Nought, which however is not eligible for discussion here, since it is not in fact a German film.) Ehe im Schatten deals with the plight of a Jewish-Gentile marriage under the Nazi regime, and is based on the actual story of the famous actor Gottschalk, who was married to a Jewess. It is a well-made and very moving film, but its conclusion, a double-suicide, is hardly encouraging.

### American Zone

Not unexpectedly, films made in the American Zone show a tendency to follow Hollywood patterns, both in story and in production technique. Zwischen Gestern und Morgen (Between Yesterday and Today) is a sort of Grand Hotel subject, ingeniously constructed in double flashbacks, beautifully acted and thoroughly gripping throughout. It deals with the return to Germany of a refugee from the Nazis after the war, and what he finds. Unfortunately, the story is so neat, so contrived, so smooth at the edges, that the emotional and psychological punches are weakened, and what could have been truly dramatic becomes not much more than enjoyable entertainment. Nevertheless, it is something of an achievement, particularly in comparison with another American Zone film-Uber uns Die Himmel (Heaven above us). This stars Germany's most permanently popular star, who survived the Nazi period intact, appearing in films without Fascist implications, Hans Albers. It was directed by von Barcy. (The same team made Baron Munchausen to celebrate the twenty-fifth birthday of UFA in 1943.) But what a shocking story. It's about a man who becomes King of the Black Market in order to get funds to restore the sight of his war-blinded son. Which having been achieved, he considers the error of his ways and returns to honesty. The Californian breezes blow too obviously.

### British Zone

Of all the zones the British has so far achieved the highest output. During 1948 a minimum of 12 new features is expected, as opposed to eight during 1947. Fortunate, too, has been the presence of Helmut Käutner, a really first-class film director, several of whose productions were banned by Goebbels. Some may remember his colour film, *Grosse Freiheit* (also known as *La Paloma*), which was shown privately by the MOI during the war. Käutner has given much help and encouragement to a new group of young film makers under the leadership of Rolf Mayer. This organization is known as the *Junge Film Union*,

and is working in a converted dance-hall in the country near Hamburg.

The tendency of producers in the British Zone -if any tendency can be clearly discerned—is to try to combine a positive approach to reconstruction with escapist or semi-escapist techniques. The first film of this type, Menschen im Gottes Hand (People in God's Hands), is a sincere but often too naïve study of post-war problems. Nevertheless, its intentions, both in idea and technique, command considerable respect, and it is also notable in depending not on established performers but mainly on a young and comparatively inexperienced cast which acquits itself more than promisingly. The film is also a remarkable example of how enthusiasm and improvisation can surmount the most appalling lack of facilities.

### Two Others

In complete contrast is a film called *Denn Finden Wir uns Wieder Derein*, which deals inefficiently and mawkishly with the adventures of a group of Hitler *Jugend* who make their way back to Berlin to defend it against the invaders, but are disillusioned by the cowardice and defection of their leaders. The intention of the film is good, but with the exception of a few brief sequences it is incoherent and rather boring.

Film Oline Titel (Film without a Title)—script and supervision by Käutner-is, on the other hand, the liveliest and most enjoyable of all the German films I have seen. It takes the shape of a script conference between all the members of a production unit, one of whom is played by Käutner himself and another by Willi Fritsch. Starting from a given boy and girl situation, they discuss the various ways it might have arisen and might be worked out. Each member of the unit describes the story from his own point of view, and this gives opportunities for several amusing parodies of film styles. At the end, the boy and girl tell the real story, on which the unit comes to a unanimous decision—its too ordinary, there's certainly no film in it. Film Ohne Titel certainly deserves early distribution in this country.

### FOR SALE

A few copies of the following publications are offered for sale. Some of them will be of much interest to our readers. Offers should be sent to the Editor.

Cinema Quarterly: Autumn 1932

Spring 1933 Spring 1934

### Canadian News

# Animated Films

### by

### Norman McLaren

*DFN* has asked me to write a short article on the conception and execution of some of the animated films I have been making for the National Film Board of Canada.

Their production method differs radically from the usual one for animated films, and this largely conditions the final result.

On the visual side their making is a one-man operation from start to finish. I have tried to preserve in my relationship to the film, the same closeness and intimacy that exists between a painter and his canvas. This is rather difficult, for in the one case only a stick of wood with a tuft of camel hair intervenes between the maker and the finished result, and in the other, an elaborate series of optical, chemical and mechanical processes, which become a perfect breeding ground for lack of intimacy, frustrations, ill feeling and hostility between the artist and his finished work.

And so my militant philosophy is this: to make with a brush on canvas is a simple and direct delight—to make with a movie should be the same.

### Examples

To illustrate the effect of this philosophy on my technique I will give details of different solutions.

One group of films made for the Film Board in the earlier part of the war publicizing the War Savings Campaign were all made by a hand-drawn-camera-less method; they were *Dollar Dance*, *Five for Four*, *V for Victory* and *Hen Hop*. As *Hen Hop* is the purest example, I will speak about it.

In it the camera, shooting, developing of original negative were completely short circuited. In one operation, which is the drawing directly on to 35 mm. clear machine leader with an ordinary pen nib and indian ink, a clean jump was made from the ideas in my head to the images on what would normally be called the developed negative. Because these ideas were never thought out in precise detail until the moment of drawing, and because, when drawing, I had a chart of exact footages of the music both beside me and in my head, the equivalents of SCRIPTING, DRAWING, ANIMATING, SHOOTING, DEVELOPING OF NEGATIVE, POSITIVE CUTTING and NEGATIVE CUTTING were all done in one operation. If a mistake was made, a small amount of water (I use saliva) on cloth would wash the offending images off the frame, and drawing could continue as before. The rectification with one swipe of the damp cloth affected all the traditional processes from script through to negative cutting.

### Summary

To summarize the technical processes involved:

Music recorded first.

Music track run on a movieola and each note, phrase and sentence marked with grease pencil.

Track put on a frame counter and the notes measured cumulatively from zero at start.

Measurements are put against the notes on a dope sheet, which is usually a simplified musical score, and, by subtraction, the length of each note in terms of frames is written in.

The grease pencilled sound track is run through a two-way winder, along with a roll of clear machine leader, called a 'dummy'. The notes are copied and identified with indian ink on the dummy.

The final drawing is done with the aid of an apparatus whose purpose is to hold the film in place, move it on from frame to frame and provide a means of registration from frame to frame. It is actually an adapted camera gate with claw mechanism and an optical system that reflects the image of the frame just drawn on to the frame about to be drawn.

The dummy is threaded through this apparatus. On top of it and riding along with it is threaded another track of clear machine leader for doing the final drawing on. With a bottle of ink, pen and dope sheet at hand drawing can begin.

All drawing is done in natural sequence, starting at the first frame of the film and working straight through to the last.

When finished, the drawn track goes into the lab for a couple of prints; one for a checking print to sync up with the sound track, the other for a master for release printing.

If colour release is desired, various kinds of dupes are made from this master and assembled in parallel to act as the separation negatives for the particular colour process used.

### **Interesting Points**

The above may sound rather like a failure to realize my philosophy of the simple, hand-made movie. However, it should be noted that the real creative job of it is all concentrated into one unified and uninterrupted session (in our paintercanvas parallel the rest of the jobs are equivalent to stretching and sizing the canvas, setting out the palette, varnishing and framing).

There are several other points perhaps worth mentioning:

Beginning at the first frame and working through to the end in natural sequence is a procedure which seldom happens in film making, even in animated shorts. I found it valuable for it allowed improvisation and had a direct bearing on both the detailed and total continuity.

The small size of the frame made it difficult to draw complex images; cinematically this is a healthy limitation for it forced me to make my point solely by the action rather than by relying on static characteristics.

The most effortless and easiest thing to produce by this hand-drawn method is extreme mobility; the most difficult, and almost impossible is staticity. This is the opposite of most other animation techniques where the static

image is the easiest footage to obtain, and the mobile the most difficult. With the standard animation technique, one breathes life into a static world; with hand-drawn technique, one slows down, to observable speed, a world of frantic mobility. (When beginners draw footage by hand and the result is projected at normal speed, the image-flow is so fast that it gives the impression of looking at thought, if thought were visible.)

The image must needs be linear; tone value and light and shade cannot be used as they fluctuate too much from frame to frame. For certain types of film this is a swere limitation.

When the National Film Board needed publicity shorts during the war, the above handdrawn linear technique served quite well, but when the need for animated films on our French-Canadian folk songs came up it was hardly adequate, particularly for the more poetic and slow songs. I had, therefore, to think of maintaining my intimacy with the celluloid in some other way. I felt the need for using chiaroscuro and slowness, and solved the problem thus.

### Doing a painting

In doing oil paintings myself, and in watching other painters at their canvases, it often seemed to me that the evolution or change that many a painting went through from its virgin state to (in my own case) its soiled and battered conclusion, was more interesting than the conclusion itself. Why not, therefore, consciously switch the focus-point of all the effort from the end condition and spread it over the whole process? In other words, do a painting, but put the emphasis upon the doing rather than the painting—on the process rather than the end-product.

And so for *Poulette Grise*, I stuck a bit of cardboard about 18 in. by 24 in. upon a wall, placed rigidly in front of it a tripod and camera loaded with colour film. To avoid reflection and waiting-to-dry trouble, I used chalks and pastel

rather than paint.

The picture then grew in the normal way that any still painting grows, being evolved from moment to moment, and each stage being very dependent on the stage before it. About every quarter of an hour the evolution was recorded on the film mainly by short, contiguous dissolves. For three weeks the surface of this one bit of cardboard metamorphosed itself in and out of a series of henly images, and at the end of it, all I had was one much worn bit of cardboard with an unimpressive chalk drawing on it, and 400 ft. of exposed film in the camera. In a sense the film was the by-product of doing a painting.

Of course the sound track has to be marked up first and the dope sheet made out in much the same way as for the hand-drawn technique, but once again the creative part of the job happened in one and only one concentrated binge, unhampered by technical headaches and frustrations. Also of importance was the fact that here again the movement evolved in its natural sequence,

This new film directed by Roberto Rossellini has not yet been released in London. It deals, as its name suggests, with life in Berlin the year after the war.

# Germany Year Nought

### A new Rossellini Film

THIS IS the third Rossellini film since he burst on the world outside Italy after the war. It is not such a good film as either Open City or Paisa, but all the same it has more real movie in it than anything else one is likely to see in a long time. Rossellini has got right inside the physical and psychological Berlin of today; that is, he has completely understood the feeling of living in a very slow, dark, and hopeless nightmare of mental and bodily misery. Germany Year Nought, which he has dedicated to the memory of his own son, tells the story of a small boy who is led by circumstances, and by the general human conditions around him, to poison his ailing father and commit suicide himself—a plot at first sight so grotesquely melodramatic as to be almost comic, but, when fitted to the uncompromising and imaginatively presented realism of the Berlin landscape, both convincing and moving. With the exception of the old father, who is an actor, all the characters are ordinary Berliners (the boy

Continued from previous page

and as a result I had a chance to improvise everything at the moment of shooting.

As this particular technique lent itself more readily to creating visual *change* rather than to *action* (side to side, and to and fro displacement of image on the screen) I intentionally avoided the use of *action*, partly because it suited the theme, and partly out of curiosity to see if *change* in itself could be a strong enough cinematic factor to sustain interest.

The technique also invited me to take chiaroscuro out of its usual role as a dead element in the decor of animated films, and put it to work as the foremost factor with a life of its own. In this I hope that perhaps I am on the way to bridging the gap that has always existed between painting proper and the animated film.

Sometimes the demands of a theme dictated a technique which was remote from my stick-with-camel-hair philosophy, as in the case of the Chant Populaire, C'est L'Aviron. My only hope, then, was to get as close to the technical mechanism as possible and thoroughly exploit the intimacy—in this case with the zoom stand, shutter and wind-back possibilities of an animation camera. But, on the whole, themes incompatible with the camel-hair approach were avoided.

To sum up, the conception and execution of most of my work for the National Film Board has probably depended on four things:

- (1) Attempting to keep at a minimum the technical mechanism standing between my conception and the finished work.
- (2) Handling personally the mechanisms that do remain, in as intimate a way as a painter his painting, or a violinist his violin.
- (3) Making the very limitations of these mechanisms, when brought in touch with the theme, the growing point for visual ideas.
- (4) Making sure of a chance for improvising at the moment of shooting or drawing.

was found working in a circus), and, apart from one or two interiors, the film was shot on location.

Technically, Germany Year Nought reveals once again Rossellini's unusual and often revolutionary style. Dialogue sequences are shot in constricted spaces, with both the camera and the characters moving restlessly in varying focal planes. Moments of great significance are pointed by the sudden withdrawal of the camera to extreme long shot-there is a moment when the boy hears an organ playing in a roofless and ruined church, and the camera suddenly shows us the scene in a high angle perspective, which recalls a painting by Chirico. But all these technical points arise, invariably, from Rossellini's conception of what the film must say. Take for example the portable gramophone playing a recording of Hitler's broadcast on the defence of Berlin, while the Tommies and the Yanks wander listlessly around the Reichschancellery, and the ruins stretch mile after mile, masking one knows not how many skeletons or how many living dead. This is not just a clever or striking sound trick; it is a sequence integral to the plot and motivation of the film.

What one misses is the different sympathy of observation which could have come had the

director seen Berlin as an Italian; it is no doubt one of Rossellini's greatest assets that he is able to enter so deeply into the feelings and outlook of those around him, but here he has identified himself so completely that it might be a film made by a German. This has happened, I suggest, for two perfectly valid reasons; firstly, no film director worth his salt could fail to reflect in his shooting the architectural and human atmosphere of Berlin (which is unforgettably horrible); and secondly, Rossellini has, with a passion that shines clear and lucid from the screen, concentrated on expressing, through the boy Edmund, the whole pity and terror of that martyred innocence which, with the atom bomb, has become the hall-mark of our modern world. It is perhaps significant that the finest part of the film is the finale, where the boy is utterly alone; we follow him, aimlessly wandering, through the city's gritty and repulsive dusk, observe, almost with horror, the traces of simple, childish interests and childish play which break across his misery, and feel, with the anonymous passer-by who sees him fall to his death, that it is, obscurely but none the less certainly, our fault. Then the camera pans up as a shabby tram trundles past, and carries us off with it on the final fade-out . . .



A scene from Greenpark's film for British Overseas Airways Corporation
The name is Three Dawns to Sydney; a review will follow in June

### NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS



### Cartoon of the Month

HERE is a project, a series of cartoons intended to introduce problems of the day to the public in a popular way, which deserves full approval. It needed imagination to sponsor such a series and it needed an acute sense of proportion to entrust these films to the expert hands of John Halas and Joy Batchelor. In both respects, the COI are to be congratulated. To have succeeded in producing two films (it is yet the start of the series), which will not only be an asset to any cinema programme because of their entertainment value, but which will at the same time encourage constructive and informed discussion, is something of an achievement—and it will certainly be its own reward.

The first of these cartoons, New Town; which gives an excellent idea of the outlines of town-planning in a most human and delightful manner, has already been reviewed in these pages: that it is, if anything, the better of the two viewed purely as a cartoon does not reduce the second qualitatively to second place, because the latter, Your Very Good Health, a discussion of the proposed National Health scheme, on the other hand, gives rather more information about its subject. Altogether, therefore, there is very little to choose between them. Both combine good humour and liveliness, qualities lacking so often as to give them almost a scarcity value.

In each film, the central figure is an engaging character called Charlie, whose shock-headed independence is sturdy and buoyant without being obstructive. He is cleverly chosen and created, because he avoids the insipidity of a Mr Average Man yet retains certain desirable characteristics which, if they do not incline members of the audience to identify themselves with him, will at least endear him to them. We are glad to see that in the interval between the showing of the two films Charlie has not been idle, for he is now able to introduce to his public a wife and child. The infant, although reminiscent of the typical cartoon baby, now and then shows enough flashes of his unique parental origin to offset this earlier impression.

Your Very Good Health answers some of the main questions which the ordinary man and woman ask about the forthcoming scheme. It is an introduction to the discussion of what is still regarded in some quarters as a controversial issue. It is, in fact, such a brilliant introduction to this subject that it may well have the effect of lulling its sponsors into thinking that no further effort in film is needed. Here lurks the danger, because the more successful this series proves to be in fostering public interest, the more urgent it becomes to follow up these kingfisher flights of fancy with detailed foreground and background films. And such films can, with some imagination, be made about subjects which are, like those of the first two films, still in the blue-print stage.

Down to the Sea. Made by Greenpark. Producer: Paul Fletcher. Director: Humphrey Swingler. Camera: George Still and Peter Hennessey. Editor: Alex Camp. Assistant Directors: John Elliot and Peter Plaskitt. Music: Guy Warrack.

Apparently an inquiry for shipping space in a Rio office will set every shippard working from Birkenhead to Belfast. This film, which is informative and factual, ably demonstrates the part that ships play in our existence. The first essential for an economic recovery is a lively export trade and, as a corollary, ships to carry our goods. The object of the film is to show the shipbuilding industry at work, from the time when the designer is experimenting with wax models in a pond, until a new ship sets out on its maiden voyage to meet that need in Rio.

As a purely objective record of why and how ships are built the film is successful, but one feels that more information regarding the lives of those who build and sail them, even to the exclusion of the handshaking of people who launch them, would add to the value of this otherwise interesting film.

Crisis in Italy, March of Time, Vol. 13, No. 8. This film illustrates the present political and economic situation in Italy, with emphasis on the potential power of the Communist Party. The Communists are represented as being active and influential in Trade Unions and Local Government. In the agricultural south they have, by agitating for the break-up of large estates, secured a large measure of support from Italy's farming population, to account for one-third of the party's membership. It is also made clear that the Americans are in Trieste. Aid is available from the United States to offset the economic plight in which the country finds itself. Can this aid be administered to ensure a strengthening of resistance to Communist political action?

During the palmy days of isolation, when Europe was nobody's business, and America had only herself to take care of, March of Time could usually be relied upon to perform an accurate and unbiased job of pictorial journalism. Pictorial accuracy may still be found, but isolation cannot be had in this, the American century. Time Marches On.



From 'Moving Millions', a new Crown Film

# COI Report

### being a list of Central Office of Information releases January-June 1948

Title	Production Unit	Details of Distribution	Notes
Answer Four Questions Any Time to Spare	Crown Film Unit Geoffrey Plumbley	NT. Primarily intended for showing to children of school leaving age Limited Theatrical Distribution	A recruiting film for the Civil Service. (Produced for the Ministry of Labour) Recruiting film for the Territorial Army and the Royal
Any Time to Spare	Productions	Elimited Theatrical Distribution	Auxiliary Air Force
Charley's March of Time	Halas and Batchelor Production	Monthly release for May. Will also be available from CFL in July	The third of the series of coloured eartoons featuring 'Charley'. This film deafs with the new National Insurance Act. (Produced for the Ministry of National Insurance)
Crete—Part 2	Editorial Film Productions		
Crete—Part 3	Editorial Film Productions	from CFL	Three of a series of four films on Crete, describing the history of the island. (Produced for the Ministry of Education)
Crete—Part 4	Editorial Film Productions		
Down to the Sea	Greenpark Productions	Theatrical Distribution probable. Final details not available at time of going to press	A film dealing with the high qualities of British shipbuilding
Falklands	Editorial Film Productions	NT	The work of survey in the Antarctic. (Produced for the Colonial Office)
Furnival and Son	Crown Film Unit	able at time of going to press.	A portrait of Sheffield. (Produced for the Board of Trade)
Here's Health	Data Production	Theatrical distribution probable. Final details not available at time of going to press	An explanation of the National Health Bill to the Genera Public. (Produced for the Ministry of Health)
History of Writing	Films of Fact Ltd. Production	Part of a Visual Unit for distribution to schools	To show the background of writing from the earliest time up to the present day. (Produced for the Ministry of Education
Home Service	Cecil Musk Production	Theatrical distribution probable. Final details not available at time of going to press	<ul> <li>A picture of the British Radio and Television Industry (Produced for the Board of Trade)</li> </ul>
How to Make Chutneys and	Films of Great Britain Ltd	Central Film Library	An instructional film for housewives. (Produced for the
Sauces How to Make Pickles	Films of Great Britain Ltd	Central Film Library	Ministry of Food) An instructional lilm for housewives. (Produced for the Ministry of Food)
How to Use the Telephone	Public Relationship Films	For distribution to Government Departments	An instructional film for Civil Servants. (Produced for the Treasury)
Miners' Weekend	Crown Film Unit	NT	A picture of the way in which miners spend their spare time at weekends
Minesweeping	Crown Film Unit	NT	An Instructional film, produced for the Admiralty
Moving Millions	Crown Film Unit	Theatrical distribution probable. Final details not available at time of going to press	
Pop Goes the Weasel	Crown Film Unit	NT	A popular explanation of how the money raised by taxation is spent. (Produced for the Treasury)
Precise Measurement for Engineers	Data Film Production	NT `	This film shows the importance of precise measurement in all phases of modern industrial engineering and the ultimate responsibility of the National Physical Laboratory for maintaining accuracy in standards of measurement. (Produced
Report on Industrial Scotland	Crown Film Unit	Monthly Release for February	for the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research)  The regearing of Scotland's industrial machine to new needs.
Surface Dressing with Tar	A Verity Films Production	NT	(Produced for the Board of Trade) Instructional film on the preparation of road surfaces, (Pro-
			duced by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Re- search)
Telephone Cable Plumbing They Gave Him the Works	Films of Great Britain Ltd Greenpark	Limited Non-Theatrical distribution Monthly Release for June	Training film for GPO Engineers. (Produced for GPO)  To discuss what can help to make a happier factory life
This is Britain No. 22	A Merlin Film Production	NT	(Produced for the Ministry of Labour) 'This is Britain' is a series of magazine films. This issue con-
ans is bittain ivo. 22	A Mermi Finn Froduction	N	tains two items:  (1) Aptitude Tests in the Royal Air Force (2) Changing a Wavelength
This is Britain No. 23	A Merlin Film Production	NT	This is Britain' is a series of magazine films. This issue contains three items: (1) Buses in Boxes (2) Wood Engravings
			(3) North Sea Cable
fhis is Britain, No. 24	A Merlin Film Production	Т	'This is Britain' is a series of magazine films. This issue contains three items:  (1) The Whirling Arm (2) Gunpowder Plot (3) Lighthouse Shop
fhis is Britain, No. 25	A Merlin Film Production	Т	'This is Britain' is a series of magazine films. This issue contains three items: (1) The Fastest Tyres on Earth (2) School for Signalmen (3) Plaster Plus
Thousand Million a Year	Anglo-Scottish	Commercially distributed by 20th Century Fox	An account of the work done by Customs and Excise. (Pro-
fown Rats	Crown Film Unit	NT	duced for Customs and Excise Department)  An instructional film on rat destruction for local authorities, health committees and pest operatives. (Produced for
frial by Weather	World Wide Pictures	Final details not available at time of going to press	Ministry of Food)  The Agricultural Disaster of 1947, and the measures taken to save the harvest (Produced for the Ministry of Agricul-
	Films of Great Britain Ltd	NT	ture and Fisheries)  One of a series of films on basic cooking, (Produced for the Ministry of Food)
/egetable Dishes			
	Crown Film Unit	Commercial distribution by MGM	An account of life in Malaya today. (Produced for the
/oices of Malaya	Crown Film Unit Realist Film Unit	Commercial distribution by Piccadilly Cinematograph	Colonial Office)  One of a series of films on the care of children. This film
oices of Malaya  Our Children's Sleep	Realist Film Unit	Commercial distribution by Piccadilly Cinematograph Film Productions. Also available from Central Film Library.	Colonial Office)  One of a series of lilms on the care of children. This film shows parents how to get their children to sleep properly (Produced for the Ministry of Health)
/oices of Malaya		Commercial distribution by Piccadilly Cinematograph Film Productions. Also available from Central Film	Colonial Office)  One of a series of lilms on the care of children. This film shows parents how to get their children to sleep properly

# Indian Cinema:

### KEY TO UNDERSTANDING

by

### K. Ahmad Abbas

ONE of the first things a foreigner notices about Indian films is that they are too long—though no Indian film has yet beaten the record of Gone With The Wind in this respect, and since the wartime shortage of raw stock, there is a general tendency to reduce the footage, supported by a ruling of the Indian Motion Picture Producers Association fixing 12,000 feet maximum for the product of its members. On the other hand, both in Britain and in Hollywood films of quite inordinate length are being produced. It is true, however, that the tempo of story development in an Indian film is slower than in its counterpart from Hollywood. So, to a foreigner, it seems longer. This criticism applies not only to film making but to a whole way of life. The Indian films are slow because the tempo of Indian life is slow, and as a mirror of this life, they unconsciously and inevitably, tend to acquire this tempo. Indian life is still slow because, artificially arrested by historical and political causes, it is still largely in the feudal stage. The Indian films will acquire the nervous tension and mounting tempo of a Hollywood thriller only when the impact of industrialism has created the same psychological atmosphere in this country as in England and America.

### **Human Relations**

The Indian films are produced for people steeped in traditions of long and patient suffering. Here time stands still and a couple of thousand feet more of a film is a drop in the ocean of eternity. We are a patient people, brought up on religion and literary epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, *Shahanama* and *Easana-i-Azad*. We are used to religious song festivals like *qawwalis* and *kirtans* that go on for the whole night, and are not likely to be bored by a two-hour movie.

For climatic and socio-historic reasons, we are a sentimental people and take human relations not so casually as the sophisticated and blasé characters of the average Hollywood picture. The family tie is still strong in India and the modern youth has yet to fight for and win his or her rights to happiness and freedom as an individual. Having been acquainted with suffering on a mass scale for too long-famines, pestilence, tyrannies, the indignities of foreign rule, the frustrations of too rigid a social system, and violent internal strife-we are perhaps a little morbidly fascinated by tragedy. We have an unhealthy desire to see not only martyrdom but even frustration sublimated on the screen. It is interesting to mention in this connection that, unlike the experience of Hollywood, the Indian movie-producer generally finds films with tragic themes more paying at the box-office than flippant musicals or comedies.

Besides films of religious appeal or those

dealing with emotional frustration, social justice and the struggle for freedom and the realization of democratic ideals provide some of the most popular themes to the Indian producers. Sentimental stories sympathetic to the poor, the dispossessed, the Untouchables, and attacking the rich and the powerful, are always popular.

Being people in an historically transitional stage ---from medievalism to modernism, from feudalism to industrialism, from foreign rule to freedom—we are, consciously or subconsciously, preoccupied with all sorts of political, social, economic and emotional problems. The problem of caste and untouchability, the problem of widow remarriage, the problem of parental interference with young people's lives and love, the problem of unemployment, famines and the economic ruination of the peasantry; all these and many more have been dealt with by the writers and directors of the Indian screen. Indeed, there is almost not a single popular Indian film which has not had a serious social or emotional subject or theme.

### Entertainment

But, shrewd businessmen as they are, the Indian producers have learnt to mix this serious content of the picture with 'entertainment'. They know the people are starved of romance and glamour in their personal lives. So they have supplied these ingredients in plenty in their films, invariably at the cost of realism and integrity. Box-office analysis reveals that, barring an occasional cycle of boy-meets-girl films, it is the triple combination of sentimental appeal, contemporary social relevance of theme, and good 'catchy' songs, which provides the formula of success. Of these, the songs perhaps are the most important—as otherwise average films like Khazanchi (1940), a plagiarization of The Way of All Flesh, and Rattan (1945), a variation on the frustrated love theme, became hits only on the strength of their popular songs.

### Religion

The Indians are perhaps the most (and also perhaps the last) religious people in the world. The early films, therefore, had religious or mythological themes. Since then some of the best and the greatest of our movie hits have been in this category. Films based on the lives of popular saints have been most successful and it is interesting to observe a progressive humanitarian sub-motif being introduced in these stories of the Men of God. This has been partly due to the fact that many a saint in India (as doubtless elsewhere—the most eminent example being Jesus of Nazareth) has been a Man of the People, too, but also in response to the latent urge of the people for reinterpretation of religion in terms

of humanity. Thus *Tukaram*, an inexpensively produced Marathi film, achieved almost a world record by running continuously for over sixty weeks in Bombay City alone, not merely because of its religious appeal, but because the writer and director had stressed the *human* rather than the *spiritual* qualities of the saint which endeared him to his people in his own times, and to millions, centuries later, through the screen.

As in all countries which have a present fraught with discontent and misery, we in India too have been unduly fascinated by romanticized versions of the 'Glorious Past'. 'Ancient Indian in all its pristine glory' is a frequently used catch-line to advertise these so-called 'costume' films which offer escape from the problems of today into a mood of proud contemplation of the past, Not a single king, queen, hero or knight-errant of history has escaped the attention of the filmproducers, and, even today, other qualities being, equal, a spectacular historical film can be more popular than a modern 'social'. But here, too, one can see the tendency to re-interpret the past in terms of the needs of today. Many an historical theme has been used as an allegory on burning contemporary issues like Freedom and Unity. And even in the worst days of strict British censorship, the censors have been powerless to ban anti-imperialist propaganda when presented in the garb of an historical film or even a mythological fantasy. Even ordinary 'stunt thrillers' (Indians counterparts of the Westerns) in which a lot of riding and shooting goes on against the Ruritanian background of political intrigue in an imaginary feudal State, have sentiments of patriotism and democracy worked into their rough and crude drama patterns. An amusing sidelight is provided by the fact that when the British Government forced Indian producers to make war propaganda pictures, anti-imperialist ideas were cleverly presented through officiallypassed 'anti-Fascist' and morale-building pictures. To give one example: In a social picture called Kismat (1943), a song number was introduced in a stage sequence, with the refrain: Dur hato, ave duniva walo, Hindustan hamara hai (Step back, step back, you foreigners-India belongs to us, the Indian). In the context of the war, the Government censors liked it because it seemed good anti-Fascist propaganda, a warning to Germany and Japan. But in the cities and towns and villages, the picturegoers who applauded it meant it to be a warning to the Imperialists to 'Quit India'!

The preponderance of songs in an Indian film has been its most exasperating feature for west-erners (and westernized Indians) who are used to expect songs only in musicals, and no songs whatever in all other non-musical films. In India there are no non-musical films. Songs are an inevitable and integral part of every one of the

approximately 200 films in about six languages produced every year. The commercial (and, therefore, primary) reason is that the cinema in India has developed into an 'omnibus entertainment' for millions of uprooted peasants and villagers who have lost their rich tradition of folk-song and folk-dance and found nothing to substitute it in the cities and the towns. We have no operas, ballets or music halls, hardly a stage, to supply the various different forms of entertainment. To most of us, the cinema is all these rolled into one; we expect it to give us music, comedy, tragedy, the vicarious thrills of romance. a taste of beauty and glamour otherwise lacking in our lives. And, shrewd businessmen as they are, the producers have been trying to supply all these in each of their films, with the result that artistic integrity as well as subtlety have constantly to be sacrificed for the sake of 'entertainment'.

### Song

Apart from this, however, we should remember that according to the strictly Indian conceptions of romance, the love urge both in its fulfilment and frustration, has been traditionally expressed in song. Again, through religious musical expressions like kirtans, bhajans, hvmns or qawwalis, the song is woven into the fabric of Indian life more closely and intimately than in any other country. Where else, for instance, on the eve of a country's freedom would the Constituent Assembly proclaim acquisition of power with patriotic hymns—sung by a lady member of the Constituent Assembly?

### Technique

A few final words about technique. Produced for a small market (there are yet no cinemas for the 80 per cent village population of India) and, therefore, on a strictly limited budget, the Indian film cannot have the technical finish and polish of Hollywood or Rank-financed British productions. Also for a long time the Indian screen remained in a crude stage, because of the reluctance of the cultured intelligentsia to associate themselves with uneducated professional entertainers who once monopolized the studios. But things have been steadily changing for the better and today the educational and cultural level of film workers—among artists and technicians as well as writers—is as high as, if not higher than, any other country. The result is a considerable advance both in technique and in the artistic presentation of pictures, though still the artistic and experimental pictures which dare to sacrifice entertainment value' for the sake of realism and ntegrity, are generally doomed to box-office ailure. Even if the average product is still of a ow standard, a few Indian pictures can easily stand comparison with the best American, British, Russian or French pictures. But they have to be judged as Indian films, produced orimarily for Indian audiences, reflecting the nood and the temper and the tastes of *Indians*, and not from the standards of commercialized universal appeal of the Hollywood films. And yet because of their peculiar Indianness they provide the sympathetic foreigner with a convenient medium for the study and understanding of the country and its people.

### Touring with Film

# Normandy Diary

France is separated from England by a mere channel, and yet how little the average Frenchman knows about the British and their way of life. The mission of the British Council in France is to explain British life and thought to French men and women so that they may understand our traditions, our institutions and our characters-also our peculiarities. Films present an admirable means of bringing to foreign audiences a picture of our country and its customs, and this diary, written during a tour of Normany in mid-winter, tells of the trials and tribulations of a British official, who was sent on a films and lecture tour in the Calvados. DFN proposes to print it in serial form during the next few months-here is the first instalment.

### The Start

Monday

It was pouring with rain and the snow was beginning to melt. The equipment filled the whole of the back of the Austin car. There was a lot of it, as I thought it wise to take a second projector and accessories in case the first gave out before the end of the tour.

As soon as we left Paris and came on to the auto-route at St Cloud, our troubles began. The rain was melting the snow, but there was a hard surface of frozen snow below the slush. It was difficult to see whether we were on the road or not. The windscreen wiper was not working, and frequent halts were necessary to wipe the window. When it grew light and we were on the main road to Evreux things improved slightly.

At Evreux we had to get petrol, A few kilometres further on the car suddenly stopped. Usual checking of plugs, pumps, carburettor. A few more yards and another sudden stop. Luckily I had remembered being told the coil was placed upside down in this new car. It was soaking wet. We dismounted it and cleaned it, then bound it up with chatterton to preserve it from the slush. This operation took ages, as our fingers were frozen and we kept dropping spanners, nuts and bolts in the snow. The journey to Deauville was fairly smooth after that except for a minor skid and for a few seconds when the car started moving backwards instead of forwards as we climbed a steep hill. Chains would have been a great help on that part of the trip.

### Deauville

Nevertheless we arrived in Deauville for lunch. The local representative of the Association France-Grande Bretagne, received us, and we sat down to lunch. A very welcome meal it was.

The cinema where we were to hold our show was on the sea-front at Trouville, next to the Casino. We took about two hours to install the equipment. The local people seemed a little

worried when they saw my small projector they thought it would project too small a picture, and great was their astonishment when I filled the entire screen using a 16 mm film!

We went for a short run along the sea-front because this was the first time that André, the chauffeur, had seen the sea, and he could not take his eyes off it. He kept saying: 'C'est merveilleux!'

### The Lecture

At half-past eight we went to the half where was to lecture on the 'Renaissance of the English Theatre'. To my horror I saw that there were about 250 children in the front of the hall and some 200 adults behind them. This was no audience for a lecture, At 9 p.m. we started, Mr. - introduced me and the children giggled and chattered. I launched myself into the subject and for 20 minutes made a noble effort to pierce the barrage of children and to reach the adults at the back of the hall. My voice gave out because the hall is large and the acoustics bad. I appealed to the children to be a little quieter, but it was no use, and I turned the pages of the lecture faster and faster. I was glad when it was over and relieved to be able to start operating the projector.

### And the Show

The programme which had been selected was Coastal Village, V-I. Steel and Desert Victory. I gave a short résumé of the programme and explained I wanted to show a quiet English village in contrast to a noisy capital subjected to V-I attacks. Steel in technicolor was, as usual, a great success and Desert Victory kept the children quiet. They could not in any case make more noise than Monty's guns.

After the show we went back to Mr F—'s house and had a warm drink before retiring to bed. I hope that I shall find other bedrooms in Normandy as warm as this one. The maid has

In spite of the failure of the lecture (which was appreciated by those fortunate enough to be near me on the platform) the show was a success. Even in Trouville there is not much in the form of entertainment—and war films are still in demand. Perhaps it will be different in other towns and villages.

Must go to sleep now as Tilly is a fair distance away and the roads are bad.

(To be continued)

### CLASSIFIED ADS

We are now in a position to accept classified advertisements.

Charges for insertion: one guinea for the first three lines, 5/- a line above three.

### DFN COMPETITIONS

### RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 3

ENTRIES FOR this competition (a letter to an FIRST PRIZE aunt explaining how documentary films differ from others) fell roughly into two groups-on the one hand were the serious entries and on the other the facetious. One competitor remarked that it was not likely that James Mason or Rex Harrison would ever be seen in documentary—there wouldn't be enough cash in it for them! Another entry defined documentary as a film which shows 'why the woman next door ran away with someone else's husband'. Well, we asked the Review Board about this and they asked us to find out where they could get hold of such a film—they thought it would make a pleasant interlude for one of their sessions.

All in all, the entries were good-Philip Mackie wins by a long lead with his masterpiece of indecision, and Ruth Partington takes second prize for an excellent entry in serious

# SOUND

### AND THE DOCUMENTARY FILM

### By KEN CAMERON

With a Foreword by CAVALCANTI

'He is undoubtedly well-qualified to speak on sound recording matters relative to documentary production.' -THE CINE TECHNICIAN

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Parker Street Kingsway London WC2

Dear Aunt Tabitha,

difficult Your question is a simple one to answer. You remember, of course, what Grierson said about creative interpretative realism realistic ereation of interp on this subject.

Well, documentaries are films which deal with or houses, or herrings, or plans real people,/and not fictional ones. They may or may not have may or have not get fictional stories, and they de may not use not use professional actors. On the whole, though, the easiest way to recognise them is by their sociological content left-wing

Isotype Government propaganda dialogue lack of dialogue the words "Control Office shortness, though some of them are quite

Anyway, if you see a film nonprobably theatrically it's bound to be a documentary, except that of course they do show nondocumentaries non-theatrically too. Perhaps the clearest way I can put it is by saying that documentary films are the films that are made by the people who make documentary films. am afraid this will not set I hope this sets yourmind at rest on this question.

> Your loving nephew, Philip

P.S. Thank you so much for the woolly ear-I always wear them at the Scala.

P.P.S. It's a silly word anyway.

### SECOND PRIZE

MY DEAR AUNT,

I should like to answer your question about documentary, but must avoid the maze of definition. Read Grierson and Rotha, makers and publicists of documentary film, to get an idea of its purpose and properties.

Then turn to films. Renoir and Vigo, Ford, Rossellini, move us by their creative interpretation of reality, you may object. Yes, but compare their properties - studio sets, professional actors, above all, a story of individual emotional reactions. Whereas documentary uses 'the native actor and the native scene', studies on the spot to find the story of work, instead of constructing

sets to suit the story of love. It prefers an economic to an emotional approach, but is none the less human. Unnamed people in an unfamiliar life may move us in Song of Ceylon; the illustration of an argument by compilation of images is a triumph in the hands of Rotha.

If art mirrors nature, documentary may be a microscope or a searchlight, turned on the essential universal aspect of humanity. This explanation becomes eulogy! See documentary films, subscribe to DFN, and complete this sketchy

Your presumptuous niece,

RUTH

### COMPETITION No. 5

THE USUAL prizes of a guinea and half a guinea are offered for a set of six maxims for the guidance of the young man (or woman) entering the film world. Entries should reach the Editor before June 15th.

### CORRESPONDENCE

SIR: May I express a measure of disappointment at the close-up of Ross MacLean? I disagree with nothing that was said, but I feelas will others, I am sure—that too much was left unsaid. For instance, there was absolutely no attempt to describe what might be called the glamour of Ross MacLean. Although this was partly redressed by the admirable illustration, the function of that extra-long cigarette holder, whether as stiletto, tickling feather, blockbuster, or even peashooter, was not revealed. One must always remember that Ross MacLean is a man of action—and not least, when, with feet on desk, and with the panorama of the Canadian landscape screaming its colours through his office window, he tilts the said holder jauntily, or with menace, at someone or other at the end of a long distance telephone

Personally, when I think of Ross, I like to remember the rapid direct action taken by him on occasions such as that on which his front tyre was blown out by a porcupine in one of the less accessible roads of Quebec late on a Sunday evening. Perhaps such reminiscences are too trivial. Nevertheless, I wish your article had registered more emphatically the dynamism of a man who, rejecting what he felt to be the worst of the English attitude, as he learnt it during his sojourn at Balliol and later in London, started, way back in 1935, to campaign in Canada for that very English thing, a Government Information Service. When others, such as John Grierson, arrived in that vast and seductive concentration of geography and ethnology. they found that the cigarette holder, used this time as a flame-thrower and ploughshare combined, had already eliminated the weeds, and equally had prepared and sown a fertile soil.

Yours etc.,

JOHN SUSSEX

# Film Classification

by

James Harris

NON-FICTIONAL films have been classified often enough according to the purpose for which they are known or presumed to have been made. On this system, if three headings are chosen, they are apt to be Specialized, Non-Theatrical, Classroom, and Public Exhibition. Another line of classification which can be useful is according to the outlook with which the film is presented, whether it is serious or humorous, intelligent or ill-informed, pedantic or moronic and so forth, the number of possible grades being almost unlimited. There is however another method of division which is simple, fundamental, and of great use in telling a reader what sort of film a particular film is, which reviewers seem to neglect almost entirely; and that is classification according to the way in which the film has been made. Classified this way the films in our field seem to be of only three species, of which any individual films are either pure examples or simple hybrids, and this because there are only three fundamental ways in which non-fictional films get assembled. Let us consider these types in order, calling them the Cameraman's Film, the Narrator's Film and the Director's Film.

### The Cameraman's Film

The simplest way in which films are made is that a cameraman is sent out to 'get a good cover' of the subject under consideration, the film he brings back is cut into whatever shape it seems most capable of taking by an editor, someone fits the result with a commentary and the job is done. Newsreels are made this way, and films of expeditions and events whose outcome cannot be safely enough predicted for the writing of scripts beforehand. The method of making sets a stamp or style upon the resulting film which is unmistakable.

### The Narrator's Film

The pure-bred Narrator's Film is made by writing a commentary or narration, and then shooting or finding in the film library shots that will illustrate what is being said. Its arch-type is perhaps not a film at all but a lantern-lecture, though the species does contain extremely successful examples. *The River* was a Narrator's Film, and *March of Time* and its imitators tend to have quite as strong a dose of Narrator as of Cameraman.

### The Director's Film

The Director's Film is that which is sometimes referred to in Production circles as a 'Properly Scripted Job'. It is the film which has been conceived as a whole, considering sound and picture simultaneously, and then photographed and put together in accordance with the original conception.

It is characterized not merely by thorough integration of sound and picture, but in addition by the use of scenes which the newsreel cameraman is unable to get because they do not exist in nature; in other words, by an approach to Studio technique. This being the most advanced form of Documentary is, naturally enough, the form in which Documentary verges upon something else, Feature Film.

### Fitness of the Species

Amongst film technicians the tendency is strong to regard only the Director's Film as a respectable type of production, while the Cameraman's and Narrator's Films are thought of as inferior. As far as the consumer is concerned, the three types are of equal value if they do their jobs equally well, and which type of production

should be chosen to expound any particular subject will depend mainly upon the nature of that subject, and also of course, upon the money and talent available. The Cameraman's Film is the right style for topical events whose authenticity is their main appeal, and whose visual interest outweighs any interest that could be added by elaborate film construction. For some instructional subjects in which there is little movement, and in general for subjects which are not very well suited to the film medium, the Narrator's Film is likely to be the style which will have the greatest clarity. As for the Directors' Film, that is a more expensive type of production, and becomes necessary whenever the subject is spread over many times and places (as when treating of the history of a song) and when the individual characters of people in the film need to be made plain to the audience. There is only one really bad reason for making a Director's Film, and that is a desire to make a masterpiece. The desire to make a masterpiece has given rise to not a few obscure and complicated films on subjects which might well have been treated with simplicity and clarity by films of another type.

The three-way classification of films according to the way they are made, can be useful to Producers as well as to Reviewers. There are subjects which could be satisfactorily presented by any of the three methods, but in order to discuss which should be used in any particular case, it is essential to have adequate terminology. The three names given above to the three discerned species of Documentary may not be the best that can be thought of, but they are here sincerely offered to all Reviewers in the interests of precision of statement, and also to all those who have occasion to state their views at Pro-

duction Conferences.

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### CORRESPONDENCE

National Film Board of Canada

I was happy to read John Grierson's comeuppance of your Board of Review for its undiscerning, snide, apparently jealous 'criticisms' of seven National Film Board of Canada productions. There was, as he suggests, little in the reviews that one would expect to see in a professional journal.

As regards Bronco Busters in particular, I saw it along with about 50 children, who would certainly not have bubbled with such delight at anything 'static'

Incidentally, I have no axe to grind, since I left NFB three months ago, and did not help produce any of the films in question; and I may add that I have written a number of sincerely ecstatic reviews of British documentary films, than the best of which there are none finer.

Now, it's only fair to point out that Grierson's list of outstanding personnel at NFB is badly out of date. Only the first three on it have worked there within the past year or more, and one has for several years been in business as an able but inimical rival of NFB. I'm amazed that Grierson should have omitted mention of outstanding producers like Evelyn Spice Cherry (Vegetable Insects), Gudrun Bierring Parker (Listen to the Prairies), Bob Anderson (A Feeling of Rejection), and Don Mulholland (Accidents Don't Happen and File 3615).

Yours sincerely,

It contains no 'documentary news' about the

making of KRO Germany 1947; no impression of

the work of the Crown Film Unit group the

author met in Scotland; only two or three re-

marks about film production in England, which

is what the author came over to study, but no

Instead, we have a propaganda article to enlist

pity for our ex-enemies. Bomb devastations?--

what a pity he could not have seen London in

1940-41 before we tidied it up some six or seven

years ago. Food? Clothes? Does he realize that

we, the victors of a war started by his people,

have had to deprive ourselves to feed Germany,

spending millions of dollars we need for re-

construction here at home? So we want peace, do

after the first World War will do anything but

make the British despise an ungrateful and

Yours truly,

BLTTY J. CRAWTER

we? And when have we wanted war?

272 Stewart St Ottowa Conada

SIR.

PAUL A. GARDNER

Some film 'fans' have told me they like going to such and such a cinema because they show What induced you to include English Diary Donald Duck; these cartoons run 7-8 mins, by Arndt von Rautenfeld in your February issue?

yet are treated as an important item of the programme.

duced, will make up for a rather poor feature. film industry more work to do.

The answer is to produce good short pictures, then the exhibitor will pay more—let us cut out the tripe and make way for some decent smaller productions—it is up to the industry.

Knowle Green Staines, Middx

Films in Agriculture

The technician who attended the recent SFA He might ponder the fact that the delegates film in agricultural education.

We Want More Shorts

Having been in the film industry over ten years, I have worked for many short-film companies.

I have always found a tendency to treat shortfilm subjects not as big pictures; I have found that, cinema audiences like shorts-if they are good but they must be good and have an appeal.

Recently I was with a short and documentary film company. I found that many of the films were treated very lightly and when we began to shoot we had a very rough script. As time went on the director saw some of the rather obvious faults of the picture, he began to despair; this sort of thing can be remedied: there should be more planning.

There is a nasty tendency in the industry to say—'He's a short-film director, he could not be much good.' This is entirely wrong. The short film is a stepping stone for features; many a good director today started on shorts and having achieved success went over to features. The medium of features is different to a degree, one has to portray something on the screen for ten minutes—but it is nevertheless worthy of a good director. He must put the film over with the minimum amount of footage and waste.

Let us treat short films as features! Very often at the cinema I have heard someone in the audience say-'The feature was very poor but I loved the short film on boats.' I think a good short is quite as important as the main film, for it can balance the programme perfectly. I should like to see more films of interest; this would balance a programme where there is a big feature of 9,000 or 10,000 ft.

Let us pay more attention to the supporting programme for these smaller subjects are the backbone of the show, a good short, well pro-Let us go all out on these pictures and give the

Yours faithfully, The Priory G. MAX KEMP

Herr von Rautenfeld does a disservice to his country if he thinks articles like this -so reminiscent of the 'pity-the-poor-Germans' propaganda

conference on 'Films in Agriculture' writes tetchily of his impressions in your last issue. most of whom had travelled long distances to be present -were by their very number a tribute to the genuine interest in the uses of the

Conferences are normally the occasion for expressing divergent views. Why should agricultural films be an exception? And if your contributor found the prevailing atmosphere critical, he can rest assured that this was in no way due to bucolic bad temper but simply an indication to the film-maker that he was failing to satisfy the requirements of those who seek to make films do the job they claim to do. Disgruntled, these critics may have been, but they are the consumers, and most of their comments were constructive.

I suggest that there are still a great many difficult problems surrounding the successful use of films in adult education work, that they occur in an extreme form in rural audiences, and that up to the present, attempts to solve them have been exclusively of the hit and miss variety.

For example, we know very little about the ideal length of an agricultural instructional film; how long (a) farmers, (b) farm-workers, (c) young farmers' clubs can, generally speaking, continue to assimilate facts which are (a) within, (b) outside, their everyday experience.

Nor has much study been made of the psychology of rural audiences in relation to films. Were this done it might be found that they showed a far greater sympathy with the nontheatrical film programme than audiences in urban areas, where glamorous associations with the commercial cinema have to be overcome. On the other hand, it would probably disclose that the language of the film, being less familiar to rural audiences, called for a slower tempo and simpler construction than in work directed at the life-long cinema-goer in the towns. And many modern agricultural films are made by technicians reared in the structural conventions of the entertainment film.

Complaints about commentators' accents are, I grant, becoming tiresome. But this again is the expression of a problem which has received no experimental analysis with agricultural or other films. As Mr Edgar Anstey noted at the conference we now suspect that the voice which read the news yesterday, lacks conviction when extolling the benefits of artificial insemination today. But has anybody investigated the popularity of various commentators? Or attempted to assess the real degree of resentment felt by Northumbrians for Devonian voices? Or even compared the response to silent and sound films? (Quite the best instructional film shown at the conference Knot-tving in the Binder, was silent.)

The answer to all these questions is no, and I suggest that until some data are available, criticisms of the kind which led to your contributor's outburst when he cried 'Nonsense!' will continue. Meanwhile I believe that expletives-however gentlemanly from Soho are not merely unhelpful, but possibly damaging. Yours faithfully,

The University Manchester 13 MERVYN REEVES

612 Rodney House

incorrigible people.

comparative analysis.

Dolphin Square, SW1

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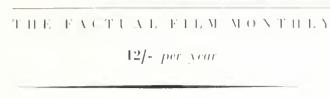
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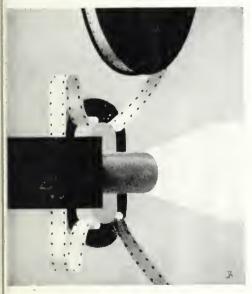
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DOCUMENTARY film news

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# CINEMA

CREDIT for the actual invention of the cinematograph is difficult to apportion. It is certain that Englishmen played an important part. As long ago as 1860 Sir John Herschel published a theory of cinematography, and about 1889 a patent for a cinema camera and projector was applied for by W. Friese Greene and M. Evans. Today the cinema is our great relaxation. But how many of us who go to "the movies", who watch the latest performance of our particular "star", realise what the cinematograph industry owes to the workers in many branches of science and technology, and not least to

the chemist? No other form of entertainment owes him so heavy a debt. Celluloid itself, the basis of the industry, is a chemical achievement. This must be transparent to give clear images after great magnification, resilient and tough to stand great strain. It must be so treated that the danger from fire is reduced to a minimum. The hand of the chemist is indeed traceable from the make-up of the actors to the lamps in the projectors. In the apparatus used for the sound-recording rare metals are needed: in the lenses of cameras and projectors, optical glass of the highest quality: in the colour-photography, pigments of the truest and most vivide olour. The sects for the ballrooms and palaces of the cinema's Cloudcuckoodom involve the use of large

quantities of paints, quick-drying stucco and plasters: the costumes and draperies must be dyed. The tale is continued into the cinema theatre itself, in its decoration, its disinfection, its air-conditioning. When next you sit in your favourite cinema, think for a moment of the patient work in laboratory and factory that has enabled you to see the wonders of the world or the finest product of the cinematograph studio so clearly and still at so modest a price.



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Important news came to hand after our other advertisement had been set up. The news is enough to justify a further advertisement.

### Roberto Rossellini

whose 'Rome, Open City', 'Paisa' and 'Germany, Year Zero' (not yet shown), placed the Italian film in the front rank of major productions, has agreed to write a special article for our first book. The name is sufficient and his contribution will obviously be of first importance. It is with added confidence that we advise you to watch out for the first number of

### "IMPACT ON FILM"

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# WHAT THEY THINK OF 'CHARLEY' CARTOONS

### The critics

### EVENING STANDARD

The new colour cartoons by John Halas and Joy Batchelor, which are designed to explain some present-day problems and their suggested solutions, succeed in being highly amusing and likeable as well. The need for town planning, the case for the new Health Act—these are tough subjects for entertainment. The fact that they *are* entertaining, while dispensing painless doses of understanding to people who would rather die than read a pamphlet, is the measure of their brilliance.

### MANCHESTER GUARDIAN

A good deal of credit should be given to Mr Halas and Miss Batchelor for the facile manner in which they have reduced legislation to simple visual terms.

### YORKSHIRE POST

They are vastly more entertaining and carry their message better than the dull diagram type of film that was much used formerly for Government propaganda.

### SCOTSMAN

The COI have used the service of Mr John Halas and Miss Joy Batchelor as directors of the cartoons, and they have evolved a new technique for their work. Technicolor is used in preference to the more glaring hues of the normal cinema cartoon, and the action is smooth and placid compared to that found in the cartoon's American counterparts.

### The public

It was the first British cartoon film I have seen and I was quite thrilled. It showed up the accompanying Disney alarmingly, and I noticed that the people sitting around me appreciated it.

Miss F. Brown, Greenock, Scotland.



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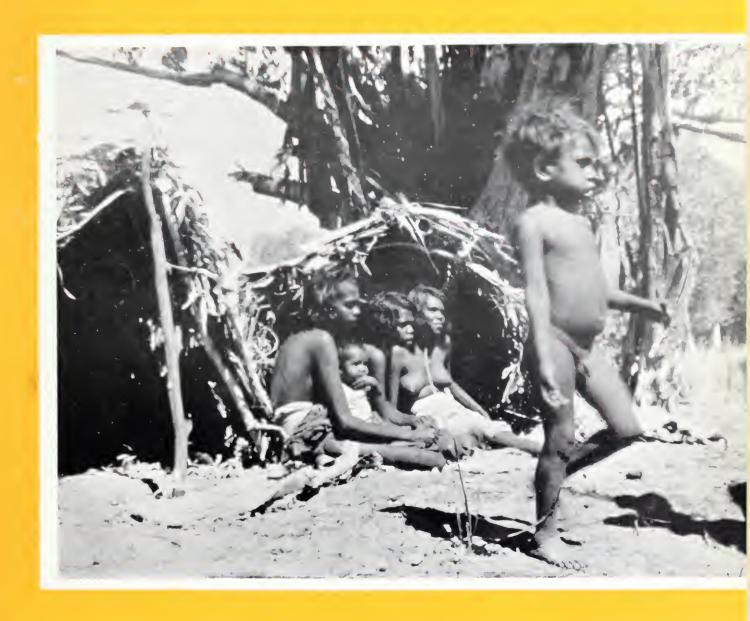
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# DOCUMENTARY Filmo meuvs

INCORPORATING DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

JUNE 1948

ONE SHILLING



### Second Announcement . . .

The film (sometimes) is an art, and its makers (sometimes) are artists. 'IMPACT ON FILM', a series of books on the creative and technical aspects of film making, realizes this—and more importantly that the film is created within a vast commercial system of complex pattern.

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VOL. 7 NO. 66 JUNE 1948

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### DRAWING THE LINE

FOR many years, stage producers in this country have played an interesting little game known as Catching the Chamberlain. This eonsisted of submitting your play to the Lord Chamberlain and then amending it according to his stipulations while not losing any of your original themes. A musical comedy producer won an Osear when he rewrote the line 'She sits among the eabbages and peas' as 'She sits among the cabbages and leeks'—and got away with it!

The screen producer has the same type of game with the British Board of Film Censors—this time it is known as Drawing the Line. The idea is that the Board draws the Line at something in your film and then it is up to you to alter the material you have shot to fit the Line. Alternatively, you can try to assess the Line before submitting the film. Whether you win or not is anybody's guess and may well depend on what kind of breakfast the Board had that morning.

The public isn't eonsulted—it takes what is left after the tug-ofwar. In fact, except for things like No Orchids for Miss Blandish, it doesn't usually know that there has been a fight.

If you want your film to be seen in America you must conform to the Motion Pieture Production Code—you must Be Careful (with eapitals) about twelve main headings. They are:

Crime, Sex. Vulgarity, Obscenity, Profanity, Costume, Dances, Religion, Locations, National Feelings, Titles, and Repellant subjects.

If you manage to make a film avoiding all the pitfalls under these headings and yet being worth seeing you will have made a real film; if you manage to do it more than once out of every fifty films you make you can count yourself head of the class.

But there's one comfort if your film is intended for Export Only -you know where to Draw the Line. Mind you, we're not going to say that the Line over there is in the right place—we wouldn't admit that for a moment—it just isn't. But if you employ an old man with a beard to sit in the corner of the set with a copy of the Motion Picture Code in one hand and a blue peneil in the other, you can be sure that your film will get by with the Legion of Deeeney. You can also be sure you have made a more than averagely bad and dreary film, but never mind about that.

Here in Britain, the Code is non-existent; like our Constitution it is unwritten. That is all to the good and should make the Board of Censors an enlightened body able and willing to judge every film on its own merits; the Board is, theoretically, able to realize that something quite out of place in a musical comedy may well be an integral part of a documentary we're not yet quite sure that it does in fact avail itself of this power. We certainly have no proof.

The Board of Censors is elusive as the Pimpernel never was; it is anonymous. We hereby issue to its members an open invitation. We'd like to hear from them, we'd like to know their ideas about the job with which they are entrusted. We hope they will accept and we promise to let them retain their anonymity. Let them introduee themselves to the public in our columns.

The Board of Censors exist for the benefit of the public; it is there to safeguard the public morality. Isn't it about time that the ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION 12s. SINGLE COPIES 1s. public was allowed to take part in this game of Drawing the Line.

### NOTES OF THE MONTH

UNDER the terms of the new Films Act separate quotas are to be fixed for British pictures to be shown as first features and for British second features and short films to be shown in the supporting programme. All makers of documentary and specialized films awaited with considerable anxiety the fixing of the figure for the supporting programme. The abandonment of second feature production at Highbury and Nettlefolds studios has re-emphasized the fact that the bulk of the British contribution to the supporting programme must come from those companies at present engaged on the production of documentary and specialized films.

These companies have recently carried out a survey of their production capacity which indicates that under proper marketing conditions they could contribute without difficulty 50 per cent of the footage required by British cinemas in terms of second features and shorts. The news that Mr Wilson had named instead a figure of 25 per cent was naturally received with great disappointment. There is no secret about his reasons. It is clear that he feels that the figure should be based largely on current output rather than upon the output which might result from an encouragingly high quota figure. He—like the production companies themselves—is worried by the poor marketing conditions which at present inhibit the supply of British second features and shorts.

The processes of Mr Wilson's logic are, however, challenged by many members of the industry, who argue that better marketing conditions can only follow the fixing of a high quota percentage and will never precede it. Certain it is that some bold action is called for from the Board of Trade if the present vicious circle of supply and demand is to be broken. It is probably true that the present output of the documentary and specialized companies cannot even contribute a 25 per cent quota in terms of theatrical second features and shorts (as distinct from non-theatrical products). But will their output ever equal their potential productive power unless a high quota figure is one day fixed?

In the meantime, it behoves all workers in documentary to see to it that the present opportunity which even the 25 per cent quota provides is not wasted. Very roughly, it means that in *every cinema* 

programme in the country there could be on the average fifteen minutes of film emanating from the Cinderella companies of the industry. In the aggregate, it represents a considerable footage and it should stimulate a considerably higher output of documentary films of four to six reels than has yet been achieved.

### Czechoslovakia

WE have just received a copy of the first number of a new publication Czechoslovak Film, a magazine published in English for the purpose of giving information about the activities of the State Film Industry to the English-speaking world. The paper gives news of films released and in production and we are very glad to see that more puppet films are promised this year—an especially interesting one should be that to be made in colour with the use of glass puppets. The glass figures are supposed to move more naturally than the ones made of wire and rubber which have been used up to now. There is also mention of the film Krakatit based on the novel of the same name by Karel Capek—we hope that this will reach England in the not too distant future. Altogether Czechoslovak Film is an interesting and useful publication and we could wish that many other countries would follow the example of the Czechoslovak film industry in sending us news of their activities.

### American Film Magazines

A CLAUSE in Schedule A of the new Films Act gives the American film industry authority to use monies accruing in this country for 'payment arising from the acquisition and publication of periodicals relating to motion pictures'. Up to now none of the cinema publications in this country have been either whole or part financed by America. We feel that this clause is potentially dangerous and we wonder how it will affect the field of British film magazines. Many new ones have sprung up during and after the war years—some of the serious type and others of the purely 'fan' variety. Does this mean that the market will be glutted with 'glossy' papers designed to whet the appetite of the British public for more American films? The situation needs watching.



Rita Hayworth Gets By with the Censor (see article opposite)

THE British Board of Censors has in the past months been in the news. As long as all goes well, nobody but the producers and the exhibitors are really aware of its existence. Then along comes a No Orchids for Miss Blandish and both national and trade Press burst out into exaltations or condemnations of its workings. And maybe the most surprising outcome of these occasional outbursts is the realization that the average cinema-goer-on whose behalf all the work of the Board is done-knows less than nothing about its history, composition or procedure. All he knows is that, before every film he sees in a cinema, he looks at a Censor's Certificate which grades the film about to be shown as A, U or H.

#### Why?

Film-making in this country was in its infancy early in this century. The public had not really got into the habit of going to the pictures, but people had already begun to realize that the film could become a dangerous weapon—that public morality must be safeguarded. The Good Old Days of Victorian prudery were not so very far away and it came about that those who make films with a hand-cranked camera and a lot of hope were mostly those goahead young men who had so far grown away from the manners of their nineteenth century papas as to be all too ready to flout convention.

The general public then had no idea (neither had the film-makers of those days) of the farreaching effects of moving pictures in the future. They did not realize that what they regarded as a novel form of entertainment would come to be the most powerful teaching medium in the world—a medium which could reach all races, all ages, all creeds and could influence thousands of people for good or for ill. They did realize that here was something new and, therefore, suspect and over which there ought to be some way of exercising a control.

And so, in 1913, at the request of the cinema trade in general, the British Board of Film Censors was set up, and both exhibitors and producers felt happier because they could now go to the public and say, as it were, 'Here is a film for you to see. It has been passed by the Censor and it has a certificate showing that it will do no moral damage to you'. The Board was in effect their baby—maybe thirty-five years later the child is a trifle tiresome and often gets obstreperous, but the fact remains that producers and distributors held hands over the font at the christening in 1913.

#### How?

The Board, as now constituted, consists of President, Secretary, four examiners and two readers. The names of President (S. W. Harris) and Secretary (J. Brooke Wilkinson) are known to all, but the remaining six members preserve their anonymity with the most incredible care. A whole month of inquiry on the part of DFN editorial staff has failed to discover their names or (and this is much more important) their qualifications for the serious job with which they are entrusted. We are told that they are 'retired public servants and all highly educated' and that there is one woman. The Board is a voluntary organization; it is non-profitmaking, its running expenses coming from a charge on footage of film viewed and paid by the producer of the film. There is a sliding scale for different types of film and here the docu-



# why? Censored how?

mentary and instructional short come off better than the feature film. Producers are also invited to submit scripts before shooting starts and these are read and commented upon by the

Every film is viewed by two of the four examiners and, in the event of their not agreeing on any particular point, the decision of the president is final. An interesting point to be noted here is that there is no law on the statute book which compels the producer to submit either his script or his film to the Board for its recommendations and amendments. On the other hand, every individual cinema has to have a licence from its local authority, and one of the causes in any such licence is that no film shall be shown in that cinema unless it has received the certificate of the Board of Censors. Therefore, unless the producer obtains his certificate, he will be unable to show his film to the general public. Sometimes the local authorities will go still farther and refuse to allow the exhibition of a film even after it has been passed by the Board.

The Board grades films into three wide categories—'U' films may be seen by everyone; children under the age of 16 may not attend an 'A' film unless taken to it by their parents or guardians; and nobody under the age of 16 may view any film which has an 'H' rating. The

Board itself admits that these categories are by no means ideal but claims that they are the only divisions which will safeguard the youth of the country while at the same time not imposing a too heavy restriction on the liberty of the citizen.

Such, in brief, is the evolution and construction of the British Board of Film Censors. It sounds excellent-it sounds as though it should work. And so it does, most of the time. But there are some peculiar lapses—a shot of an operation essential to the theme of some documentary may be deleted for no particular reason while a feature will get away with some good old rip-snorting sadism. On this month's cover we show a picture from a documentary which did not get by the Board ordered 'delete shot of black boy showing sex'! The still on the opposite page was passed! We wonder how these two conclusions were reached, and what actuated the anonymous viewers in their decisions. We would suggest that there may be more danger in the attitude of Rita Hayworth than in the actual nudity of a small black boy.

What is the answer? Some form of control is obviously necessary and certainly desirable. We do not want to be bound by the rigid and tabulated Hays Code type of censorship-what then can be suggested as an alternative?

# Canada Goes to China

Ьy

#### Grant McLean

THE rain fell in a fine spray. Murky, low-hanging clouds almost obscured the S.S. *Rainbow* as she edged her way up the Woosung River, past miles of junks and sampans. The flat, treeless terrain stretching for miles on both sides of the river loomed unreal and uninviting. Anchoring in midstream the cargo nets of the *Rainbow* were slung over the side. They contained baggage marked 'Fragile', 'Handle with Care', 'Canadian Government Property'. A lonely figure alternately roared and pleaded with the deck-hands as he nervously followed the progress of the gear as it was stowed in a bouncing LCM, a dirty-grey assault craft now intent on water-taxi service in the harbour of Shanghai, China.

I was that lonely figure and my mind was busy unscrambling the reasons for my presence on this alien shore, surrounded by thirty pieces of luggage and equipment; and before I had time to organize my thoughts I was immersed in a sea of meaningless babble and surrounded by hundreds of milling Chinese dock labourers in the dusky segment of a cold March evening.

#### Nine Months' Venture

This one-man expedition to China was the result of combining the desire of UNRRA to obtain documentary film evidence of their work in China, and the willingness of the NFB of Canada to co-operate in this regard, having also a view to the value of new documentary material on China. An agreement was reached by John Grierson, the Canadian Government Film Commissioner, and Bill Wells, UNRRA's Films Division Chief. This agreement formed the basis of my China venture. I left New York on board the S.S. *Rainbow* on February 13th, 1946, and arrived in Shanghai on March 25th. It all seemed so simple and straightforward.

With a deep breath I plunged into the crowded streets circling my ten porters like a sheep dog. I left China much the same way nine months later. But a lot had happened in those nine months.

From the first I worked in close touch with Gerald McAllister, head of the UNRRA Public Information Section in Shanghai. McAllister won my immediate admiration by rescuing me from a native brothel where I was billeted, and offered to share his room with me at the Metropole Hotel. We formed an excellent working relationship, so that at no time did any friction arise in working out what stories to cover in the interests of UNRRA.

#### Distribution of Supplies

UNRRA had reached an agreement with the Chinese Government whereby one of the Government agencies, called CNRRA (Chinese Relief and Rehabilitation Administration), took over UNRRA supplies at the dockside and

handled their distribution in the interior of China. The now so well known inefficient and often corrupt distribution of supplies was one of UNRRA's major problems. It was the responsibility of UNRRA to see that its supplies were distributed honestly and without regard to political or religious creed. The fact that less than two per cent of the supplies reached Communist China is evidence of UNRRA's inability to adhere to their charter in this regard. The original basis of the Chinese operation, the UNRRA-CNRRA agreement, was palpably unworkable, and all the efforts of Kizer, Ray, La Guardia and Rooks failed to change the distribution pattern. However, some UNRRA supplies were reaching the interior, UNRRA's technicians had leaped into their huge tasks with energy and will; things were being accomplished and I set out to record that work and its effects on the country as a whole. It was necessary to shoot more than this actual delivery of supplies in order to get the meaning and significance of the story that UNRRA wanted. The decision on what stories to shoot and what should be the overall approach to my year's work in China was one of the more difficult problems which had to be faced immediately upon arrival. The situation in China was complicated by so many factors, and in many of its facets was so near anarchy, that UNRRA's instructions to me were hardly enough to go by.

#### Story Choice

I was compelled by circumstances to cover what stories I considered best, having in mind the general directions outlined by UNRRA. With the very real difficulties of transportation and communication, an error in judgment in this regard could have easily cost a month or more of my limited stay in the country. For example, if the Yellow River project had proved a failureand it hung in the balance for many weeks-a great deal of my work in that area would have been in vain. In making decisions of this sort, reports from UNRRA field workers were of value; talking with men who had just returned from the interior proved even better, though a Ouija board probably would have worked well in conjunction with these other methods. At least I understand that this last method is impartial, and nothing else in China was!

#### **Problems**

Though finances had limited the size of the unit to one man, a two, or better, a three-man unit would have proved more effective. Too much time had to be spent making arrangements, and there was also the problem of having to spend so much time doing the little things necessary to staying alive.

Other production problems in China could be listed: as political, civil war, transportation, communication, heat, health, humidity, dust

GRANT McLEAN is nephew to Ross McLean, Films Commissioner of Canada. He has been with the Canadian National Film Board for about six years—is head of their Camera Department and ranks as Director Cameraman.

and languages. One of the reasons for separating the political problems from those directly associated with the civil conflict is best illustrated by relating one of my experiences with a Government ministry. I was informed in an interview with a Government official that all footage had to be developed and censored before leaving the country. I dreaded the thought of having my rushes processed in China. What few machines they had were ancient and ill-kept, and the chemicals were years old, having been captured from the Japanese. I set out to convince the authorities that my status as a Canadian Government official and as a UN representative should place this footage outside of the normal rules and regulations. They suggested a compromise: they would have one of their men go with me and cover everything in 16 mm. This they would process and censor, with the understanding that we would censor the 35 mm. material in the same way. This would have been completely impractical and I thought it wise to ask for the same treatment that would be accorded a Chinese Government cameraman working in Canada. Several hours passed, a great deal of tea was consumed, but the point was won.

#### Travelling Around

Foreigners in China were required to have exit visas before leaving Shanghai for any other part of China. This added to the innumerable delays faced prior to each trip into the interior. The civil war made it difficult to pass easily between the Nationalist and Communist-held territories. The ebb and flow of the civil war made it uncertain from day to day who would be in control of the region I would be travelling in. I made two expeditions far into the Communist regions to cover specific stories on UNRRA's work. My flag-bedecked jeep was never turned back at a barricade, though cajolery and threats, so often necessary, were enough to get me into and, fortunately, out of a number of uncomfortable situations. The poor marksmanship and rusty rifles of the peasant-conscriptees combined to give comfort whenever boldness seemed the only way to get through. However, whenever a coup of this sort was necessary, I took great care to return via a different route. Some other UNRRA programme personnel units were not so lucky. No other cameraman had the good fortune to get to Yenan, then the Communist capital. For the first time, Mao Tse Tung was photographed in motion pictures.

#### Transport

The transportation problem was one to which there was no satisfactory answer. I used trains (the war constantly interrupted the normally poor service), planes (most unsafe, for the maintenance facilities were limited), boats (every-

thing from American LST's to sampans), donkeys and foot power. Once it was necessary to travel with my gear from the flooded section of the Yellow River to Chengchow by wheelbarrow. A jeep, given to me by a Chinese general at the Yellow River project, was one of my most valuable possessions. Carrying 525 gallons of gasoline about, I could travel about six hundred miles before refueling. The time allotted to travel, as related to shooting time, was of quite a different order than even, say, in Canada, where distances are at least as great, but where modern transportation facilities exist.

Heading the problems of communication came the difficulty of getting raw stock, shipping rushes to Canada, sending off reports and getting reports on rushes from Ottawa, and the difficulties of keeping in touch with the office in Shanghai while away in the interior. So far as camera reports were concerned, it really amounted to shooting blind, for it took about five weeks for rushes to get from Shanghai to Ottawa. As some of these shots had been taken five weeks earlier, it was nearly three months before any word could come through on them. There was no regular way in which rushes could be shipped. On each return to Shanghai, I would have to spend days finding someone going back to America who would take the exposed stock in his care. A wire ahead to the nearest Canadian consul or commercial attache to have him meet the boat or plane proved the best way to expedite the film to Ottawa. Every batch of rushes had its own story, but true to the American fable of life, they all ended happily and no footage went astray.

#### Health Difficulties

Health was certainly a problem. About fifteen injections, taken before going to China, promised to save me from all sorts of hideous diseases. Refresher shots had to be taken continually in order to get exit visas from Shanghai before each trip into the interior. Though I travelled through plague, malaria and cholera zones a great deal, only a few days were lost in hospital with a slight attack of malaria. Every conceivable form of dysentery plagued me, but I kept a large supply of sulpha-guannadine on hand and thus managed to keep ahead of the game.

The heat was troublesome, but more of a personal bother than a technical problem. I suffered a good bit from prickly heat; it was not an uncommon sight for the Chinese farmers, staring at my manouevres, to watch me leap into the air when a wave of prickly heat hit me-it was like being engulfed in a blanket of needles.

#### **Dust and Language**

I grew to hate the Yellow River dust. It was extremely fine and hard. The cameras, a Newman Sinclair (4 lens turret) and a turret Eyemo, had to be dismantled every night on the Yellow River project story, the parts and cases cleaned and reassembled. The Eyemo was easy to maintain as I had a complete set of spare parts for it. The Newman was more of a problem, though it did hold up remarkably well. On several occasions I had to machine parts for it to keep it in operation. Not trained in this field, I was fortunate that the parts which failed were easily made. Out of the 25,000 feet shot, about 1,000 feet was lost because of camera troubles.

The language problem was ever with me.



Grant McLean

I learned about a hundred words on the thirtynine day voyage to China, and these certainly were useful. A good interpreter, however, was still essential to my work. My first interpreter was good on languages and dialects, but whenever a particularly arduous trip appeared in the offing, he took to bed with malaria. For this reason, I had to make one trip to Kaifeng in Honan province by myself. The problems in China were more complicated than they were, for example, among the Eskimos, where the needs of the interloper are simple and more easily expressed in sign language. On my third return to Shanghai, UNRRA assigned one of their translation-pool interpreters to me. He was fluent in English and French as well as in Mandarin, Shanghai and Cantonese dialects. He stayed with me for the rest of my time in China and proved invaluable. While the language problem never made it impossible to get a shot, it did slow everything up. It was vital when dealing with the curious Chinese peasant to learn the various dialects of Chinese which gave meaning to the phrase which combines the prayer and curse of a documentary cameraman—'Don't the UN must move to achieve its objectives.

look at the camera!"

The footage sent back from China was edited into eight newsreel stories which were shown throughout the theatrical circuits of America. A one-reel film, called China's Need, was produced by the National Film Board. It was widely distributed non-theatrically in conjunction with a drive for China relief funds.

The need for such films becomes more vital every day, so that the mass of people in each country may feel the problems facing the citizens of other countries and be able to relate their own problems with the rest of the world. The basis of our democratic freedom and progress is based on a high level of mass awareness. Documentary films can and must be the greatest factor in giving the impetus necessary for this development. I believe that the United Nations should have or sponsor such responsible documentary units in the interests of peace National organizations, such as the National Film Board of Canada and the Crown film units in England, could work closely with such a programme. It is through this field, I believe, that

# NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

How, What and Why? Made by Basic for G-B. Director: Kay Mander. Editor: Kitty Marshall. Animation: Cynthia Whitby. 20 mins. each.

THIS SERIES is a completely new departure for the G-B Children's Film Department and should prove a very useful addition to the programmes of the Saturday morning film clubs. The child perpetually asks the wilting adult, often just as ignorant, the how, what and why of everyday things. Presented simply and imaginatively popular science expositions can help to satisfy some of this eager curiosity. Children's encyclopaedias have already provided a partial answer; but one has to remember that only a small proportion of the child population has access to them. A film magazine shown at the Saturday morning clubs can have a very much wider coverage.

The first three issues of *How*, *What and Why?* have got off to a good start as far as the choice of items is concerned. Each issue contains three items of the following kind:

What makes a fire go out?
Why does the outside horse on a roundabout go faster than the inside one?
Why does a doctor feel your pulse?
How do railway signals work?
How do animals walk?

The chief limitation is in the way in which the material is presented. In one or two cases the explanation does not actually answer the question. Why does a doctor feel your pulse? is, in fact, an account of how blood circulates through the body. The intermittent action of a stirrup pump squirting water through a thin



Why does a Doctor feel your Pulse?

rubber tube shows very well what is meant by pulsation. But no indication is given at the end of the significance of differences in the pulse rate with which the doctor is concerned. This kind of confusion could be avoided by more careful scripting. Again, in the item which shows why lock-gates are needed on canals, the explanation is perfectly lucid, but would have been helped a lot if the camera had been moved a little further away from the lock itself, enabling one to see the actual difference in the water levels, which is the key point to establish. Finally, if this series is going to hold the attention of child audiences under the exacting conditions of the Saturday morning clubs, more imagination is needed generally in the visual presentation. One cannot rely on the spoken commentary getting over more than a small part of the explanation.

The magazine is clearly up against a host of problems, but the service it can provide is an important one, and we look forward to seeing the progress made on succeeding issues.

#### Moving Millions-Crown Film Unit

Moving Millions deals with London Transport. It surveys the widespread activities of the machine that trundles millions of Londoners every day on their various occasions. In a style reminiscent of one of those popular versions of White Papers which, some civil servants imagine, grip the interest of the public like the fooling of Mr Danny Kaye, it gives all the facts and presents a perfect picture of an efficient, cheerful, punctual public service for the existence of which we should all be truly grateful. In this rather overcrowded vehicle, millions may be moved, but they will not include the members of the audience.



What can the Elephant do with its Trunk?

sir: In the May issue your correspondent Mr Mervyn Reeves complains, quite rightly, that nobody really knows the effect of films in agricultural education.

We, who are so deeply engaged in this type of work, are only too much aware of this lack of knowledge.

We have now arranged for the Social Survey, the Government's own research organization, to do a field survey in the autumn and winter into the effect of a sample agricultural instructional film on agricultural audiences.

We hope to get answers to some at least of the questions Mr Reeves askes.

Yours faithfully,

RONALD TRITTON

Director, Films Division

The filming of Shakespeare is one of the most controversial issues in the world of cinema. It is one of those matters which set critics at each other's throats; nor is the field left to the professional critic—schalars, teachers, theatrical producers all come along to take a hand in the battle. We have watched the usual spate of printed matter which filled the papers after the exhibition of the long awaited film of 'Hamlet' and we have decided to go right outside the ordinary critics. The two reviews printed below are unusual—the first was written by Ted Cork (16 years) of Film Centre who had never read the play and did not know the story before seeing the film: the second is by a documentary technician.

TO ONE so inexperienced as myself in the works of Shakespeare, this film holds many surprises.

By far the most outstanding feature of this film is the amazing clearness of the Elizabethan English. Throughout the film, the blank verse of Shakespeare is extraordinarily easy to understand. The opening scene immediately creates a sense of evil and sinister plotting. The dramatic way in which Hamlet's father appears, seemingly suspended in mid-air adds to the eerie effect. The bleak halls and stairways of the eastle provide an admirable setting for the revengeful Hamlet. The heavy dramatic incidents, however, are enlightened by extremely elever wit such as we never, or at least very rarely, hear from modern writers. The whole east is brilliant throughout, Laurence Olivier's Hamlet is indeed a pleasure to see. His diction is polished and clear, and his acting is excellent. This, certainly, needs no further comment. The queen seemed a little young to be the mother of Hamlet, but despite this, her acting. especially in the scene where Hamlet kills Polonius, was extremely good.

Jean Simmons' Ophelia fairly establishes her a great young star. Although at first she seems out of her depth in Shakespeare she quickly recovers and the dramatic climax when the death of her father transforms her into a complete lunatic and she drowns herself is both saddening and brilliant. Felix Aylmer as Polonius gives us one of the greatest performances of his career. As the faithful counsellor of the king he is both tragic and amusing until ne meets his death. From the beginning, the plotting of Hamlet to bring about the downfall of his uncle, the king, provides us with incident upon incident until in the last scene both Hamlet and the king are killed by each other's

This film will be a great enlightenment to all those who have always regarded Shakespeare as too classical to enjoy, and must rank as one of the greatest of motion pictures ever to be produced and it is truly heartening to know that it is the result and the work of British technicians and actors.

TED CORK

FOR ONE who is not an authority upon Shake-speare to review *Hamlet* as a version of the play—particularly after once seeing—would seem in intolerable impertinence. But for a technician to air his views upon *Hamlet* as the work of a bunch of film technicians telling in their various media a simple story of a man's revenge

### Hamlet

### Prince of Denmark

is perhaps just permissible. Almost everyone who sees the film will like it up to a point, and everyone will inevitably, and perhaps privately, make his own reservations. Technically, however, it is almost impossible to criticize. The camerawork is superb. The rather hard lighting and depth of focus appear somewhat strange in a British film, but they do give a bleakness and grandeur to the settings. The restless camera could so easily be irritating were it not for some of the most accurate operating I have ever seen. To my mind this is the technical triumph of the picture. It takes great skill to manoeuvre a camera through the tortuous paths of Furse's Elsinore, but never for a moment is there a trace of hesitance or indecision. The recording is beyond reproach perhaps the finest dialogue recording we have had from Denham; and if the voice of the Ghost may have rightly incurred the ridicule of some critics, let them suggest some better way of illustrating the ethereal, Roger Furse's sets and William Walton's music are all that for months we hoped

and knew they would be.

Why then is one's praise tempered by a tinge of doubt? Personally I feel it is because Olivier is not a Hamlet for whom one can have sympathy or understanding. He is cold and—dare one say it?—affected as only Olivier can be. Someone has said that the film is full of quotations. That is exactly what it is, probably because Olivier has not had someone in charge of the action who can temper his own personality. This is no story of a man who cannot make up his mind. Olivier knows his own mind only too well, and his mind is to convince us all by brute force more than anything else that his Hamlet is indeed the Lord thy Hamlet, and that thou shalt have no other Hamlet before him.

But this is no way to end. Here is a prestige film of brilliant merit in so many ways, It is a triumph of technical achievement and a very noble attempt. Millions of people all over the world will see the film of *Hamlet*, and who are we to blame them if they see it only once!

A TECHNICIAN



Polonius



# Stuart Legg A Close-Up

by Donald Alexander

AT first sight, Stuart Legg is a sombre puritanical character, with a keen nose for detail, and, paradoxially, an aptitude for wearing primrose neckties. We remember with embarrassment our muffled rage when he took over the producership of Strand in 1937 (Rotha was at that time leaving for a year's session at the Museum of Modern Art in New York) and he promptly announced his intention of descending on our snug location in South Wales 'to help with our dialogue shooting'. (It was our first dialogue film, and he was only taking wise precautions, but what we expect from the old governor we do not always take from a new broom.) Within one hour of his arrival, he had made himself more helpful than any producer we have ever known, which helpfulness continued for the next three days, without Stuart ever apparently emerging from the background or visibly opening his mouth. When he got back he told his wife Margaret that he was greatly impressed with our capabilities as a director, and she dutifully passed on the information. Thereafter we would have died for him gladly-certainly we were prepared to work ourselves to death. Now, we too, produce—but that high level of skill or that low level of cunning we dare not

As a servant of documentary Stuart is prehistoric. He is first found in the Cambridge reminiscences of equivalent old-timers like Basil Wright and Humphrey Jennings, busily working away on *Power* (production: Cambridge Film Society), and developing a majestic social conscience. (Incidentally, he once accused us of being dominated by a social conscience; that's like Stuart's puritanical nature, to attribute to others the virtues he is too austere to claim for himself.) It is true he so far deviated from the stern line of duty as to meet his wife while he was still in *statu pupillari*: but in fairness it must be recorded that Margaret Amos was a don's daughter.

After leaving Cambridge, Legg worked with Gaumont British Instructional from 1931-2; then he joined the Empire Marketing Board Film Unit and stayed on, after the GPO took over, until 1937. Next he was translated to Film Centre, and very soon afterwards to Strand, where he stayed till the summer of 1939. From then on he fits into the pattern of the develop-

ment of the National Film Board of Canada, first of all in Ottawa, and latterly in New York. His chief for so long, John Grierson, gives Legg maximum credit for the 'World in Action' series, which in international short films distribution ranks second only to the older 'March of Time'. Now there are rumours that he is coming back, and that is the second most heartening piece of news we have heard in a long time.

From the beginning Stuart Legg never made the pretty films, which hit the headlines and got the swagger box office bookings. Certainly he directed BBC Voice of Britain, and (with Anstey) Under the City, but his has mostly been the hard graft of contriving something out of nothing, of personally editing ramshackle material into presentable shape; of pulling whole series of films out of limbo, of pioneering difficult projects. The cutting-room and his office-desk have been the control points at which he has always been found with his coat off and his sleeves up, pushing out more product to the minute than any other film maker since D. W. Griffith. We remember Wings Over the Empire—probably the most thoughtful and moving of all the Strand Imperial Airways films, patched together out of all the bits and pieces discarded by the directors who had shot (or had shot for them) their private material for their private epics. We remember how through Legg the evolutionary plan which Julian Huxley was struggling to communicate to us stupid filmmakers suddenly began to illuminate the whole series of zoological films made at Strand, and how it reached fulfilment in Hawes' Monkey into Man and in Legg's own Fingers and Thumbs. We remember, too, how he sat down and wrote a treatment for an Economic Survey of Scotland, which country he had never visited, and how little that line was altered in the final Wealth of a Nation after we (who were indigenous anyway) had been for months on the spot reporting with a camera.

Working and living hard, harder than circumstances really require, seems always to have been Stuart and Margaret Legg's motto. But typically, some of the most memorable things about them are their contributions to the off-duty apocrypha of documentary. On a Friday night or a Saturday morning, out would come the old Rolls-Royce (yes, it was a Rolls-Royce: touring model, vintage 1924, picked up for £60), and we would trundle off from the workaway Legg domicile on Shooter's Hill to a clapboarded farm in Lamberhurst, Kent, from which Stuart fondly imagined he would some time be able to commute (poor Stuart, there was no commuting for him until he took out a season from New York to Ottawa). And very determinedly we would ride horses at Tenterden, or pace the back seat quarter deck of the Rolls down to the Elephant's Head at Hook Green, and stay watching cricket and playing darts and drinking vast quantities of beer for a long summer's evening. Once we took Legg on a ceremonial drive round Scotland, with Grierson and Wright acting as official cicerones to this country he had written up but never seen. We remember every roaring detail from the preliminary dinner at Rogano's Sea Food Restaurant to the formal visit to the Grierson ancestors in a churchyard beside Bannockburn, and Stuart's gloomy acceptance of the evolutionary plausibility of a hairy Highland Cow, contrasted with Grierson's rapturous and improbable claim never before to have encountered the species. That time we were stationed in Glasgow-at the Central Hotelbecause Grierson insisted (probably rightly) that it was the only place to which important contacts could decently be invited. Stuart stuck it for one night; the next day we moved to a quiet pub in Bath Street where our joint social consciences were not offended by 'plain breakfast' (coffee and roll) at 2s. 6d., and where the beer was better. Our contacts still came to the Central: like them. we just called in.

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# Gregg Toland, Film-Maker

by LESTER KOENIG Illustrated by HARRY HORNER

LESTER KOENIG is a member of the Editorial Committee of the 'Screen Writer' he was able to gain first-hand knowledge of Gregg Toland's camera technique during the production of 'The Best Years of Our Lives'



"If you study the faces about you, you will find they are not all the same color."

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, a leading European film nan came to Hollywood, saw Citizen Kane, and told its cameraman, Gregg Toland, that ne was 'the greatest cameraman in the world'. 'No,' said Gregg. 'That isn't so.'

'Really,' replied the European, 'who is

Gregg named two cameramen, then added, I'm only third best.'

Gregg may not be the best, or even third best cameraman in the world. But it is true that ne is universally acclaimed, and a great many people abroad consider him one of the great artists of the film.

Unlike other creative and talented people vho come to Hollywood after coming to naturity and reputation in the theatre, literaure, radio or related media, the growth of the ameraman because of the nature of their vork, has been indigenous to Hollywood. For hat reason, understanding a man like Gregg Toland, is to understand one of the strongest ispects of the complex Hollywood character. Gregg is what I call a film-maker, and a pro-

The start of the Toland career was not very pectacular. It began in 1919, when he was an office boy at the Fox Studios on Western Avenue. One day he looked up and saw a ameraman on a parallel, cranking away.

'I never forgot that sight,' Gregg said, somevhat embarrassed by his youthful romanticsm. 'It seemed so glamorous and I made up ny mind that's what I wanted to be."

'Didn't you have any previous interest in photography? Boy turns hobby into paying proposition, and all that sort of thing?

'No,' he said, 'I didn't have the faintest inerest in photography. It just seemed exciting o sling a tripod over your shoulder, and it eemed mysterious to go into a dark room and oad film.' He laughed. 'And besides, an office oy in those days made twelve dollars a week. nd an assistant cameraman made eighteen.'

'Do you still feel being a cameraman is "exiting" and "mysterious"?' I asked.

'Yes, I do,' he said. He said it in a way that howed he knew it wasn't the sophisticated hing to admit. Gregg is not a naïve man, and he knows how ridiculous enthusiasm for your vork can make you appear to your friends. et, the fact that Gregg can still feel this exitement and mystery gives him a decided advantage over some of his more jaded colleagues.

Gregg worked as an assistant cameraman for a good many years through the 'twenties, through the golden days of Hollywood's prosperity and madness, days when Tom Mix, William Farnum and Theda Bara were stars on the Fox lot. His first jobs were on two-reel Al St John comedies.

'By the way,' Gregg said, 'I'll tell you frankly I was a very good assistant. I made sixty dollars a week when the others were only making twenty-five or thirty. But I was worth it, I was proud of the camera. I used to stay on nights and polish it.'

Finally, in 1929, the hard work paid its dividend. Gregg left the assistant ranks and teamed with George Barnes to photograph his first picture, The Trespasser, starring Gloria Swanson, and directed by Edmund Goulding.

'We had twelve cameras shooting simultaneously to cover various set-ups, and we had two sound tracks going. In those days we didn't know how to cut sound, so we'd shoot the sound in one solid unit, and then cut the film from our twelve cameras to fit the track. Since all our cameras ran continuously, one some days we had 30,000 feet of rushes.

The early, experimenting days of sound were the formative period for Gregg's technique. After The Trespassers, he did more pictures with George Barnes: The Devil Dancer starring Gilda Grey, and The Rescue starring Ronald Colman.

His first picture on his own was Eddie Cantor's The Kid from Spain, which Samuel Goldwyn produced in 1931. It was a musical and it was made before the days of the playback. Instead of the current practice of pre-recording a musical number and then photographing it to synchronize with the sound, the orchestra was recorded as it played on the set. Gregg had to keep two cameras going together. When one would move in for a close shot, the second would be moving back for a long shot.

The men who made pictures in those days had to be the inventors of their own technique. Today, Gregg feels we may have lost something, a stimulus to our creative thinking because so much of the inventing has been done before. In the past, many brilliant things reached the screen because a technical problem had to be overcome by men of imagination who had no one to stand over them and say, 'You

can't do it that way, because this is the way we always do it.'

In a very real sense, as a partial list of his over forty films indicate. Gregg grew to maturity with the medium: Tugboat Annie (1933). Roman Scandals (1933), Nana (1934), We Live Again (1934), Les Miserables (1935), Splendor (1935), Dark Angel (1935), These Three (1936), Beloved Enemy (1936), Dead End (1937), Kidnapped (1938), Intermezzo (1939), Wuthering Heights (1939), Long Voyage Home (1940), Grapes of Wrath (1940), Ball of Fire (1941), Citizen Kane (1941), The Little Foxes (1941).

During the war Gregg served in the US Navy where he made films, in the Pacific, and later in South America. In 1945, he returned to the Goldwyn Studios, where he has been working almost consistently for over twenty years, to do The Best Years of Our Lives

GREGG'S value as a cameraman transcends the concrete aspects of his work in the films he has photographed. He is a highly articulate man, who has done a great deal of creative thinking about the function of a cameraman in the complicated series of personal and technical relationships which are necessary to the making of a film.

In trying to work out some standard of judging photographic quality, he found the conventional criteria inadequate. For example, the terms contrast, texture, balance and composition are used in judging the quality of photography. A scene is well photographed, supposedly, if the cameraman has been guided by accepted principles regarding these elements. It is customary to balance off the faces of various actors in a scene so that there are no jarring contrasts. However, if you study the faces about you, you will find they are not all the same colour. To be true to reality, the cameraman would have to recognize that, and

Yet,' Gregg explained, 'in The Best Years of Our Lives when Fred Derry (Dana Andrews) comes home to his father (Roman Bohnen) and stepmother (Gladys George), I was criticized because 1 didn't eliminate the contrasts in the tone of the faces. It was done deliberately, I wanted to allow the audience to see the white, unhealthy appearing stepmother, the drinkflushed father, and the healthy young bom-

(Continued overleaf)

GREGG TOLAND (contd.)

bardier. It semed to me that helped tell the

It is the story which matters most to Gregg. He has gone beyond the literal rules of camera grammar to use the written word as his point of departure. He feels motion picture photography can be judged good or bad only in its relation to helping tell the story.

Obviously, if the screenplay describes a plain girl, the cameraman isn't helping the story any if he makes a gorgeous glamour close-up. In Hollywood, studio policy usually results in the cameraman trying to make the plain heroine as glamorous as possible. It is just this kind of disregard for story values which concerns Gregg most in his thinking about standards of motion picture photography

in Hollywood today.

Recently, a test of a young actor was made by one of Hollywood's leading directors with a reputation for brilliant camera effects. The actor was seated behind a table, seen in threequarter profile. A man was seated in the foreground, asking him the usual 'personality' questions. The man was smoking a cigarette, and the cigarette smoke was artfully worked into the composition. It was a beautifully 'composed' shot, with only one drawback: because the actor was placed in the background of the shot, and because the smoke partially concealed him, the function of the test had been subverted, and a prominent director who was viewing the test with an eye to hiring the actor, commented, 'Very fine cigarette smoke. Now, if you bring me a shot where I can see the actor. I'll be able to tell whether or not we can use him.'

This is a crude criticism, and a fairly obvious example. Of course, one would say, you should be able to see the actor in a test. But how can you apply this functional, or utilitarian doctrine to scenes in a film? Do you mean all photography should be 'newsreel' in quality to be realistic?

Under ideal conditions the cameraman should work very closely with his director.

Gregg's own account of his approach to a few of his films may throw some light on the matter. Since each of the stories posed different problems, no set formula could be used. Gregg felt he had to study the script, discuss the story with the director, and evolve a separate style for each picture.

'Wuthering Heights,' he explained, 'was a soft picture, diffused with soft candle-lighting effects. I tried to make the love scenes beautiful in a romantic way. It was a love story, a story of escape and fantasy. So I tried to keep it that way photographically, and let the audience dream through a whirl of beautiful close-

'On the other hand, Grapes of Wrath had to be a sharp picture, It was a story of unhappy people, people of the earth, who had real problems and who suffered. So we made it very sharp. There wasn't any make-up used. The picture had some extreme effects in low key, but they were, I think, real. As I remember, the camera moved only once-a long travel shot through the sordid streets of a Hooverville, It was what the occupants of the car, after the long drive to a promised haven, were examining. Photography such as we had in Wuthering Heights could ruin a picture like Grapes of Wrath completely.

'Long Voyage Home was a mood picture. Storywise ("storywise", significantly enough, is one of Gregg's favourite words), it was a series of compositions of the mood of the men aboard the ship. It was a story of what men felt rather than what they did. The camera

never moved in that picture.

'Citizen Kane was a great experiment. It was a story of Kane's personality, what he had done to other people, what his life meant. It was a psychological story, yet the external realities were very important. It required a still different kind of photography, an expansion of camera technique beyond the usual limitations. Many points of view had to be shown. We had to experiment because the scope of the story

demanded it. Kane's photography would scarcely have suited Wuthering Heights or even Grapes of Wrath. We experimented in forced focus depth, in travel shots, in startling effects, and in full ceil-

inged sets.

'The Best Years of Our Lives was another experiment. But in a different way. It was Wyler's first picture after the war and was my first black and white since the war. We talked at length about the story and decided it demanded simple, unaffected realism. Willy had been thinking a lot, too, during the war. He had seen a lot of candid photography and lots of scenes without a camera dolly or boom. He used to go overboard on movement, but he came back with, 1 think, a better perspective on what was and wasn't important. Anyway, Willy left me pretty much alone. While he rehearsed, I would try to find a method of shooting it. Usually he liked it. When he didn't, he was the boss and we did it

his way. However, at this point we understand each other pretty well and Willy knows that I will sacrifice photography and time i it means a better scene. I, in turn, know that he will listen to any suggestion. I think Best Years was well photographed because the photography helped to tell the story It wasn't breathtaking, It would have been wrong to strive for effects. We were after simple reproduction of the scenes played without any chi-chi. The only time I held my breath was in the powder-room scene when I thought we might be getting arty and trying to prove how damn clever we were instead of playing a scene. But Willy was right. It worked for us. If I had to label the photographic style of the picture, I'd call it "honest".

GREGG'S working habits may be of interest since. they run counter to so many established views about Hollywood's creators. While it is true that technical personnel on a production, and cameramen in particular, put in long and hard hours, it seemed to me, that as I observed Gregg during the production of The Best Years of Our Lives, that he and William Wyler, the director, worked harder than anyone else in Hollywood.

Under ideal working conditions, the cameraman should be included in the preparation of a picture. He should work very closely with his director. 'Unfortunately,' as Gregg pointed out, 'they don't in this business. The director may work for months on a story, but the cameraman is tossed a script a few days before shooting.' In Best Years, Gregg worked on the picture from its inception, getting each version of the screenplay, and the revised pages as they came from the writer, Robert E. Sherwood. This enabled Gregg to plan the production requirements, to scout locations and shoot photographic tests. But, in addition, it enabled him to familiarize himself with the story itself, so that he had a thorough 'storywise' understanding of each scene, of each character. With this background, and with constant discussions with Wyler, Gregg was able to use his technique in the best interests of the story as a whole,

During the writing of the script, I remember going out with Wyler and Gregg to look over the location for the exterior of Fred Derry's father's house. On our return to the studio, Gregg suggested that I take Sherwood out to see it, partly to see if it was what Sherwood had visualized, and partly to see if it would give him any ideas. A few days later, when Bob Sherwood and I went out and looked the place over, Bob said he was very glad he came because seeing the dilapidated exterior of the Derry home made him realize the audience would not have to be told very much specifically about Fred's background. One shot of the wretched exterior would give a very real feeling of what his life had been like before he came an officer in the Air Forces. Therefore, added exposition in dialogue would be super-

Gregg is in an advantageous position for working with writers and directors, because as well as a cameraman, he is a key figure in the operation of the Samuel Goldwyn production set-up. He is under exclusive contract to Goldwyn, and works very closely with the production executives in all their planning. The average cameraman works by the picture, and consequently is not in a position to add efficiency to production. Other companies might well profit by Goldwyn's example of more closely

integrating their able and experienced camera-

men with production planning.

In any discussion of the Toland style, the question of forced focus is bound to rise. At the time of Citizen Kane, it was quite extreme to see objects 18 inches and 200 feet from the camera simultaneously in focus. Now, of course, we take such shorts for granted. Carrying focus is obtained by use of fast film, stopping the lens down to a very small aperture, and a lighting key much hotter than that used eonventionally. 'Forced focus,' Gregg explained, 'is not a trick, and should not be considered as such. It is an aid to directors, since it gives them more freedom in staging scenes. As Willy pointed out in his article in last February's Screen Writer, "I can have action and reaction in the same shot, without having te cut back and forth from individual shots of the characters. This makes for smooth continuity, an almost effortless flow of the scene, for much more interesting composition in each shot, and lets the spectator look from one to the other character at his own will, do his own cutting"

'Beyond that,' Gregg said, 'it helps the audience see more, and consequently see more story,'

3107 V.

'What about your photography in the Navy? Do you think it had any effect on your style?'

'This is an odd thing to admit,' Gregg said, 'but I found many times when I didn't have all the Hollywood equipment at my elbow, that the results were superior. Why? They looked real. No haloes of back-lighting, and no soft flattering modelling. For example, in Honolulu I used to go into homes or business houses to do a short sequence. Through the windows I'd have an f.22 exposure. Inside, an f.3.5 exposure. I would go ahead, photograph for interior, and get an extremely over-exposed exterior. But it looked real. I suppose some place in between the extreme of such candid photography

and the extreme commercial front-office style, there must be a compromise point where we can make pictures with realism. I think there is a noticeable trend in that direction.'

(to be concluded)

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## Normandy Diary

#### second instalment

Tuesday

To Tilly via Caen, It was not too bad a road, provided we slowed down every time a car came the other way as the edge of the road is covered with frozen snow. Whenever a lorry comes in the opposite direction we slow down and stop. They are absolute brutes, these big lorry drivers.

Caen seems just as much in ruins as it did last year. We stopped for petrol—and a coffee with rum, a typical Normandy drink, which is most acceptable in this filthy weather.

When I asked the way to Tilly-sur-Seulles I was told Tilly did not exist any more! When I explained to a peasant that we were supposed to show films there, he suggested we should try St Pierre, the neighbouring village.

Tilly is indeed destroyed. The cross-road marks the place where Tilly once stood.

M. C—— received us and took us to lunch at the only hotel. Conversation with the different people we meet is always interesting and can be divided into two or three subjects—food, reconstruction (or the lack thereof), rising

prices, and conditions in the UK. I felt I should have taken last year's lecture on Post-war Problems with me, as everyone asked me about our problems and the solutions we proposed. It is surprising how little the average Frenchman knows about England. No one would believe me when I said England was a very poor country and had spent all her foreign assets during the war.

After lunch M C took us to the hut where we were to project our films. We pinned up a sheet, tested the equipment, blew the fuses (this invariably happens) and chose the films. The car got stuck in the mud and we had to throw gravel under the wheels. A Bren carrier would have been ideal for this tour or even a light tank.

Tilly was the centre of most bitter fighting. It is said to have been taken and retaken 23 times, but as M. C—— explained, local people had no idea of the campaign as a whole. For this reason I showed West of the Line. a narrative of the Normandy campaign. Coastal Village and V-1 were again shown at the beginning of the programme. Plastics was given last as it is in technicolor. Although the commentary is in English, it is quite easy to follow and was appreciated because few people know how plastics are made and the many uses to which they are put.

There were about 450 people in the hut. The heat was terrific and I had hardly any room to move because the projector was in the centre of the hall. A spot of bother with a print, too. It was old and worn. Shall have to mend it tomorrow.

Dr W— has put me up tonight. Central heating in the house! As I came up the stairs tonight to go to bed, I saw a cat on the stairs and stroked it. Imagine my horror when I found it was a stuffed animal. There is a peculiar smell in the house, must be stuffed cats.

(to be continued)

#### NEW BOOKS ON FILM

Composing for the Films, Hans Eisler. (Oxford University Press, New York, 1947.)

Three-quarters of this book has a purely regional significance. It is a bitter attack by a sadly disillusioned man on some of the methods of musicmaking in Hollywood—an attack which is too often doctrinaire and politically one-sided. A victim of the recent 'witch hunt', Hans Eisler, through the interest and intervention of musicians and artists throughout the world, has now been given permission to leave America and breathe the more congenial air of Europe. In Hollywood he was a fish out of water a fish whose atonal scales glittered defiantly in the clam chowder of Hollywood mass production. A book so bitter is bound to be biased. Eisler makes little reference to the undoubtedly good musical scores that have appeared from time to time from the American studios and, save for one or two isolated references to Russian film scores, he ignores entirely the great contribution to the advance of film music that has been made in this country and countries outside the American orbit-or rather, outside his own orbit. This is understandable, a man with such strong views and, moreover; whose musical god is Schonberg will have little patience with the less severe standards of the non-atonal school of thought. Nevertheless, Eisler's indictment of Hollywood musical methods and tastes makes interesting reading and, although it is difficult to believe that what he says is said without prejudice, it makes one rejoice in the freedom of action and thought that is the right of the composer in this country—the freedom to compose for films without the surrender of artistic integrity.

The final chapters of the book have a more general application and given an intelligent summary of the technical problems and possibilities facing the composer when dealing with the highly intricate medium of film music. Though many of Eisler's suggestions have long been the common practice of the best European film composers, it was important that these should be placed on record, particularly as the best-known book on the subject (that by Kurt London) has long been out-moded. It is all the more to be regretted that the issue is so frequently confused by the clouds of red dust arising from the resounding thwackings Eisler deals his hobby-

horse. To the impartial reader it is not wholly to be wondered at that the hobby-horse irritably assumed the accourtements of a charger.

W.

Bette Davis. Peter Noble. (Skelton Robinson, 8s. 6d.)

The first half of this book relates the career of one of Hollywood's best actresses and bonniest fighters. Mr Noble's account is interesting, if never very profound, and he manages to avoid the mixture of adulation and personal chit-chat which makes up the usual film star biography. The writing, though is unduly repetitive and occasionally even slipshod. Miss Davis's own views of the necessary balance between type-casting and character-acting are worthy of note, while it is a surprise, now that critics are upbraiding British producers for over-working their players, to find that, in her first five years in Hollywood, Miss Davis made no fewer than thirty-two films.

The remainder of the book comprises a list of all the star's films, with cast-lists, main credits, and plot-summaries of the more notable ones, and a collection of thirty-five stills, well chosen but not so well reproduced.

#### FOR REFERENCE

### Complete List of Film Strip Manufacturers

#### Army Kinema Corporation,

Dover Street, London, W.

Distributors of film strips made for Army Educational Dept.

#### British Industrial Films Ltd,

177 The Vale, Acton, W.

Publishers of Unicorn Head film strips. Strips made for industrial sponsors. Teachers own material made up. Distributors for National Film Board of Canada.

#### British Instructional Films Ltd.

Mill Green Road, Mitcham, Surrey. Publishers of educational film strips.

#### Cartoon Film Strip Company,

137 Hamilton Terrace, NW8.
Publishers of film strips for young children, for use at home and in junior schools.

#### Common Ground Ltd,

Sydney Place, SW7.

Publishers of educational film strips. Strips for industrial concerns.

#### Council of Industrial Design,

Tilbury House, Petty France. Strips on Design for sale and hire.

Daily Mail Visual Aid Service, Northcliffe House, EC4.

Publishers of educational film strips.

#### Dawn Trust Ltd.

The Studio, Aylesbury, Bucks.
Publishers of religious film strips.

#### Dufay Chromex Ltd,

P. & O. House, 14-16 Cockspur Street, SW1. Teachers own material made up.

#### Educational Publicity Ltd,

17 Denbigh Street, Victoria, SW.
Publishers of educational film strips. Strips for for industrial concerns.

#### French Railways Ltd.

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# DOCUMENTARY film news

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#### TURNING IT OVER

'Some make big ones, some make small, More from each means more for all.'

So runs one of the new Government posters issued to exhort the factory worker to greater efforts.

But is the factory worker the only person who should make this contribution?

No, we've got a new Films Quota in England. From next October 45 per cent of the Main Features and 25 per cent of the supporting programme must be Made in England.

And this means more work for the British film worker—not just more employment but more work, better work and more cooperation.

The Exhibitors are groaning; they don't like it and they say that more exhibitors than ever will default on this quota.

Why not make more films and better films and show the exhibitors that they have nothing to groan about? It can be done.

The Americans are groaning; they say that this is the last straw.

Have they ever considered whether they would be content with a 45 per cent and 25 per cent quota for American films to be shown in America? We doubt it!

Mr Rank says it can be done—and for once we agree with him.

But it means better films, films made with more economy and with less time-wasting.

And in Documentary it means more interesting films, films with a sense of humour, films which do not try to preach but just to do what is the necessary function of every good film—to wit, to entertain.

The people stood for a lot of propaganda during the war—it was necessary then and Documentary made a real contribution to it.

But now it has a chance to prove that it has grown up—that it can make films the public will enjoy seeing—films which stand on their own merits and do not prop themselves up on the excuse of having a message to deliver.

The customer goes to the cinema first and foremost to be entertained. He does not pay out good money to have pompous propaganda rammed down his throat.

'Some make big ones' (Mr Rank and the other Main Feature boys).

'Some make small' (Yes! that's you, Documentary producer).

'More from each means more for all.'

Yes—more work, better work from each section of the industry will mean more employment, more films and a self-supporting British Film Industry.

#### NOTES OF THE MONTH

#### New Flaherty Film for Edinburgh

The Louisiana Story, a new film by Robert Flaherty, one of the world's most outstanding directors, will open the Second International Festival of Documentary Films in Edinburgh on Sunday, August 22.

'Nothing could please me so much as this great honour of showing the film at the Festival,' wrote Mr Flaherty in reply to the invitation to show his film which, on behalf of the Festival Committee, was conveyed by the Lord Provost of Edinburgh.

The Louisiana Story is Mr Flaherty's first feature film since he made Elephant Boy ten years ago in India. It is described as a dramatic fantasy about a Cajun boy in the Bayou marshlands of Louisiana. Over two years in production, it has just been completed and the Edinburgh showing will be its world première.

'The Louisiana Story,' Mr Flaherty has stated, 'is about a thirteen-year-old Acadian boy—Acadian is French-Canadian from Nova Scotia—who believes in mermaids and fairies. His father is a hunter living in the marshes. The film is a fantasy and in some way comparable to Elephant Boy. As with all our pictures, we first settled down in the locality to assimilate the everyday life of the people. We rented a house in the Cajun town of Abbeyville, Louisiana, and lived there, getting to know the inhabitants and obtaining their friendship and confidence, just as we did on the Aran Islands for Man of Aran and in Samoa where we lived in a native village for two years while making Moana. We let the story of the picture grow out of the people and the locality.

'It took us three months to find the boy to play the leading role, a search similar to the one that unearthed Sabu for *Elephant Boy*. This is one of the most important phases of making a movie of this kind. Since we do not use professional actors, it is necessary to find people who will fit the parts that are called for in the picture and who can "live" their roles. If you are careful and get people to perform what they have done all their lives, they can do it better than actors. Certain peoples, like the Irish, Negroes, Polynesians, Eskimos and Russians, I have found to be naturally wonderful actors.'

Mr Flaherty's historic *Nanook of the North*, a picture of Eskimo life made in 1921, was recently re-issued and was as successful as when first shown more than twenty-five years ago. During the war Mr Flaherty made *The Land*, a film on soil erosion for the United States Department of Agriculture.

#### The Labour Party Film

FOR THE past few weeks John Curthoys (director) and a team of script writers and actors have been busy producing a new Labour Party film. It is a three-reeler and is part of a new policy of the National Film Association, an organization jointly conceived by the Co-operative Movement, the Trades Union Congress, and the Labour Party to develop the use of 'visual aids' in the workers' movement.

Instead of the old-fashioned documentary, with its all-knowing commentator, this is a one-act screen play. It is a distinct advantage in these days of austerity to have a dash of entertainment in any message you may want to convey to a message-saturated public. This film puts as much emphasis on entertainment as

message. The title of the film will be *Their Great Adventure*. The whole thing has been conceived, written and shot within two or three months.

John Curthoys is the director. The key part of the local MP is played by Cecil Trouncer, the Magistrates by Richard Ainley and Margery Bryce, the Chairman of the Court by Gordon Begg. For the rest, many other people have put an enormous amount of effort into the first Labour Party film—not least Mr George Wynn. the manager of the Co-operative Film Unit.

The whole Labour Movement is taking immense interest in the film's progress and its release is eagerly awaited. It is hoped that a London *première* will be arranged in the autumn, when full details of distribution, rental, etc., will be announced.

#### **OLIVER TWIST**

WHENEVER A film is made of a popular classic, there is an unfortunate tendency to make comparisons as to the suitability and accuracy of the film in following the development of the author's story and the importance of arriving at his conclusions. Latitude is granted to film-makers inasmuch as it is recognized that it would be impossible to interpret in terms of moving pictures every image evoked by the words of the writer. Deviation from the rigid structure of the original often produces feelings of nostalgia, or even of downright indignation that the work should have been treated with such apparent disregard. This is the natural reaction of a public with a healthy respect for their eminent writers, but it indicates a lack of appreciation of the film as an independent method of expression.

In attempting a true assessment of the merits of Oliver Twist it is necessary to dissociate the film from the novel. In this way it is possible to consider the film according to the standards of the medium in which it is made.

As most of us will remember the story of Oliver Twist involves a constantly changing scene. This unfortunate little boy who starts life in the lugubrious atmosphere of a workhouse, is transported from there to the home of an undertaker and later to a thieves' den in London; his temporary rescue by the kindly Mr Brownlow provides his one experience of comfort and security. This indicates the size of the canvas. It is impossible to stay any length of time in one place. For example, the workhouse, with its sordid atmosphere, its unhappy inmates, and complacent officials, must only occupy our attention for an all too brief space before we are hurried on to the home of Mr Sowerberry, the undertaker. Consequently instead of a rounded and finished product, the impression is that of a series of isolated episodes. Each of these episodes is vividly and beautifully portrayed, but because of the sharpness with which they are defined they do not blend to form an integrated whole.

The photography is imaginative, and it is a pleasure to see such an intelligent and exciting use of the camera. In the opening scenes, by means of dramatic cutting and photography, the extreme physical *malaise* of a woman about to give birth to a child is conveyed in a way better calculated to enlist our sympathy than a two-hour sound track of labour ward groans.

#### QUOTES ABOUT THE QUOTA

J. Arthur Rank: 'Already 60 per cent of the pictures shown on our circuits—Odeon and Gaumont—are British. We shall budget at least to maintain that figure. The new British quota is a very fair one, but this time we must see to it that all exhibitors do play British films and do not avoid their obligations.'

Ralph Bond (Vice-President of ACAT): 'It will certainly mean a big stimulus to production but, unless Mr Wilson keeps his repeated promises of financial help to independent producers, all the plums will go to the big combines and their American associates. The low quota for supporting programmes is a blow to documentary producers.'

Senior Executive of an American Company 'We cannot help but regard it as a direct effort to squeeze us out.'

Alec Guiness as Fagin in 'Oliver Twist'

H. D. Hughes (MP and Chairman of Committee A): 'The supporting programme is not financially, at present, an important part of the industry but, aesthetically and in terms of entertainment, it is an important part taking something just under one-half of the showing time. I fear the result of this low quota of 25 per cent will be that something only less than half of our screen time will be open to American second-feature and short productions which may be of a very low quality indeed. In fact, it seems to me that there is a danger in the difference between these two quotas that the American production, diverted from first-feature showing by the comparatively high first feature quota, will, in order to occupy surplus capital and to keep its name on the market, be forcibly diverted into the second feature and supporting programme, and will, in that way, artificially be induced to compete with a section of the industry which, on many occasions, the right hon gentleman and his predecessor at the Board of Trade have expressed their wish to encourage and promote.'

R. M'Laughlin (Edinburgh Branch of Cinema Exhibitors Association): 'Independents in this section view with alarm the proposal of the Board of Trade . . . as the supply of films is hopelessly inadequate to meet the quota.'

Sir Henry French (Director-General of British Film Producers Association): 'This quota must be complied with, and all exhibitors must play their part. It is absolute nonsense to talk about the need for 450 feature films a year to feed all the film demands of our cinemas.'

Eric Johnston (President of Motion Picture Association of America): 'This 45 per cent quota is excessive, unnecessary and impossible of fulfilment, and violates the spirit of the Film Agreement recently negotiated between the British Government and the United States film industry.'

'Daily Express' (June 15): 'The quota is unsatisfactory because it lays down that Britain, impoverished as she is, shall depend for more than half her films on imports from a wealthy creditor country. . . . Films made by American interests in this country will count as 'British' for quota purposes. Yet all their earnings outside Britain will go straight into the pockets of the Americans. They will contribute not one cent to Britain's exchange position.'

'New Statesman and Nation' (June 19): 'Mr Wilson has kept British cinemas open by the Film Agreement. He has now quite properly demanded from exhibitors, in return for that boon, that they should support the home industry and, indirectly, that they should assist in financing it. There is no doubt that, given a chance, British film production can reach its new target.'

### Tour in Belgium

#### by JOHN MADDISON

John Maddison has just completed a series of lecture-shows of British scientific and documentary films in Belgium. The series was arranged by the Belgian Institut National de Cinématographie Scientifique with the help of the COI, the British Council and the Foreign Office

ONE FILM critic called the set of films I took to Belgium a 'valise d'images', and as Cleinge, Abel, Georges the lorry driver and I progressed with our transit-cases across Flanders and Wallonia in the May sunshine, we felt rather like pedlars. The audiences were film society members, university students and staffs, and secondary schoolboys and girls, in nearly a dozen towns and cities. The programme¹ was a solid one—two hours and a quarter of demonstration, exposition, persuasion and polemic. Yet if we missed any item from the advertised list, the customer always let us know of his disappointment.

#### Le porridge!

Seeing our films through the eyes of another people and trying to explain to them in their language why the films have been made, inevitably one experiences a freshened impulse to self-criticism. If documentary isn't to be a right little, tight little national enclave, opportunities must be given to our technicians (and not only the bagmen of documentary like myself) to see and feel their own work anew in the company of foreign audiences. This tour underlined for me at any rate two of the elements of documentary and teaching film production. First of all, there's commentary. Only two of the films shown (Instruments and Cyprus) were dubbed versions, 1 provided a makeshift French commentary for most of the others (except The World is Rich) as near as possible to the English scripts. I was made aware continually of the great importance of commentary in establishing a rapport between film and audience. There was, for example, always laughter and a surge of friendliness from the audience when, in Life Cycle of Pin Mould, I explained that the mould at one point was growing on 'le porridge'-and so identified it as inescapably British!

#### Visual Exposition

If commentary writers can hear themselves speaking what they write to a *living* audience, we may hope to escape the condescensions, the pomposities, the feeble cracks and the lumbering tautologies sometimes issuing from the sound tracks. The other factor is visual exposition—the need for absolute clarity and logic in the choice and arrangement of images. This is especially important now that British documentaries are regularly going to all parts of the world, even if some of them are dubbed into a

score of languages. How the Telephone Works (I saw it a dozen times) is an object lesson; it was made in 1937.

#### Artistic Qualities

Experience showed that the films had been well chosen. I knew the audiences seeing them were used to French scientific films and shorts, and I warned them not to expect 'fantaisie' and visual fireworks. Lucidity and good sense were equally important, I maintained. But the critic of Le Drapeau Rouge, the Communist daily, stressed the artistic qualities of films like Your Children's Eyes, and in a long article in Le Soir, André Thirifays found all kinds of unexpected aesthetic virtues and excitements in the films. Those who remember Thirifays' comments on documentaries shown at the Brussels Festival in 1947 will know that he can be a severe judge. The World is Rich made the biggest impact on the audiences-I won't soon forget the comment of one of them, a Baron and a bon vivant. 'Ca m'indigne,' he said with feeling.

#### Henri Storck

One of the pleasures of the trip was to renew acquaintance with Henri Storck, witty, sincere and to my mind, still the best of the Belgian film directors. I saw again his Easter Island and for the first time Idyll on the Sand (1931), a film whose style reminds one that Storck once collaborated with Jean Vigo. Here in Britain, the new generation in the film societies would find them, I believe, enchanting. Apart from the child delinquency film he is making for the United Nations, Storck is now completing a film on Rubens. Paul Haesaerts, the art critic and scenarist of the film, showed me the script. It promises to be an extraordinarily interesting experiment in what is Paul Haesaerts' special line-the movie camera as a new mode for criticizing and interpreting painting. I also talked with Charles Dekeukelaire, whose recent book Cinéma et Pensée, reveals his search for greater profundity in the medium. Dekeukelaire's pre-war Congo is also a film which might well be revived for our film societies. He is at present discussing with the famous psychologist, Professor Michotte of Louvain, a film he is to make on Michotte's researches. My constant companions during the tour were two promising young technicians who have worked with Storck and Dekeukelaire, Charles Abel, the cameraman, and Jean Cleinge, a director. Cleinge has just finished his first film, Héritiers du Passé. This was an impossible assignmenta two-reel survey of the whole history of Belgian culture, made for the Army. In spite of this, Cleinge's film has movement and a sense of style, and his name is one to remember.

These young men are two of the active spirits behind the Institut National de Cinématographie Scientifique, formed only last year. The third and most important is its Secretary-General, Luc Haesaerts, barrister, and, with his brother Paul, the leading interpreter of modern Flemish art. The Institut's work is only beginning and to form an idea of Luc Haesaerts' character, one must turn to the Séminaire des Arts, a group activity largely initiated by him. On a semi-voluntary basis, it is the focus for a whole range of enterprises, including a little theatre, a children's theatre, a weekly journal, a musical society, a library of books, and a national film library (poor in resources yet but with a collection of some 400 German films). The Séminaire's headquarters is in the Palais des Beaux Arts, which itself must be an institution unique in Europe, and perhaps the world. The day we presented our programme of British films in one of the theatres of the Palais, Brailowsky was giving a recital in another part of the building, the Marionettes des Champs Elysées were playing Cocteau's Mariés de la Tour Eiffel with the Queen of the Belgians in the audience, a French feature film was showing in the Palais public cinema, and one of the finest exhibitions of French, Flemish, German and Italian paintings ever assembled, the Pinakotheka of Munich Collection, was going on in the galleries. In the April number of Documentary Film News, Sinclair Road wrote on Art and the People. Any forward thinking civic leaders who may have read his article might next investigate the Palais des Beaux Arts. After all, Brussels is much the same size for population as, say, Manchester.

The impression I brought away from the Institut National de Cinématographie Scientifique (heightened no doubt by its goodwill and friendliness) was of youthful hopes and purposiveness. But who could fail to warm to a country, one of whose film societies calls itself Les Amis de la Lanterne Magique?

<sup>1</sup> The films were, in whole or part, as follows: Extracts from Film and Reality (work by Urban, Bruce Woolfe, Canti and Russell Reynolds), How the Telephone Works, Life Cycle of Pin Mould, Cracking, Children Learning by Experience, Your Children's Eyes, The Story of Penicillin, The World is Rich (for adults), Cyprus is an Island (for schools), Instruments of the Orchestra, and three superbunedited sequences in colour, from a series of twelve films on agricultural pests which J. V. Durden of Photomicrography Ltd. is making for Shell.

### Off With Their Heads!

# by-

Jack Beddington was, during the war, Director of the Films Division of the Ministry of Information. Before that, Publicity Director of Shell Mex Ltd. Was one of those who made the Government realize the value of the film in wartime propaganda

THE trouble with the documentary film world today is that the old gang is still in charge. It was, therefore, a great delight to me to hear considerable criticism of them by younger people at a private debate the other day.

It was equally a pain to me—though not a surprise—to find that with a notable exception none of the old gang were present to hear those criticisms, though they must have known that they were coming.

The old gang twelve or fifteen years ago were pioneers with new ideas, great enthusiasms, courage and honesty. They are now middleaged, much fatter or thinner than they were, and no longer potential geniuses. I cannot see that they have made any advance in the last five years. Humour they do not understand; criticism they resent. This is no state of mind with which to startle, tickle or impress the world.

I recently saw two films about housing, shown one after the other. About eleven years separated their dates of production. Apart from slightly better photography in the newer one, there was nothing to choose between them. There is, however, an enormous difference in the outlook of audiences today and those of eleven years ago. Documentary film-makers must get this into their heads.

Before the war, there was a sympathy and a receptivity for the kind of work that they were doing. People were not conditioned by the frustration and brutality to which we are all now accustomed. This must be taken into account. We have had a terrible time for ten years and if film-makers want us to listen to them, they must either have something refreshing to say or a refreshing way of saying whathey are frightened by two of the simplest and most acceptable things in the world—humour and beauty.

I need scarcely labour my point of humour because none of them will deny that they want to put it in their films. I must none the less point out that they cannot do so—as it were—on purpose. Humour in the sense in which I am using it must be spontaneous and can only come from those who have the gift of laughing at themselves. It does not necessarily consist of jokes, funny 'business' or epigrams; it does mean the presentation of human beings in the round with their good and their bad points, without sneers and—above all—not as types.

This brings me to what I believe is the cardinal weakness of the old gang. They are consistently pressing a political point of view. It is,

I believe, of no importance what that point of view is provided that it does not prevent the film being exciting or interesting or stimulating in its own right; but the moment a piece of propaganda in a film is considered of more importance than the film itself, the film is bound to fail and to preach to none except the converted. If only the old gang would realize this and even that their political points of view are both well-known and old-fashioned, they might be induced to give up intrigue and wire-pulling and come back to film-making.

W.

In their early days they freely announced that they were only using films for propaganda purposes, but in those days they were young and enthusiastic and deceived themselves in a more agreeable fashion than they do now. In fact, they loved making films and it was for this reason that beauty and humour crept in despite their *professed* attitude of abhorring the aesthetic. This is one of their silliest and most self-conscious tricks. I am glad indeed

that it does not seem to be shared by the newcomers. They don't seem to me nearly so frightened of either laughing or crying and it is for this reason that I have great hopes for the future.

44

I am carefully avoiding the old controversy of the appeal to the intellect as opposed to the appeal to the emotions. I don't really believe that any film-maker in any type of film-making consciously accepts such a difference. Some want to express their own theories of good and evil; some want only to entertain or to make money. All use the methods that come easiest to them. What comes through on to the celluloid is the essential quality of the makers. Some films come out dull or distorted, or difficult to understand. Some don't.

-1>

I can only hope then that the newcomers will retain their enthusiasms and their energy and vigorously chase out the old gang as soon as possible.



A still from a new COI film on the Civil Service—the title is 'Answer Four Questions'

# University Film Centre?

Ьy

#### STANLEY OREANU

IT IS usual to think of the older universities clinging with the grasp of rigor mortis to ancient times and ways. One believes that behind the up-to-the-minute striving of bright young people, the core of the University lies in cloister courts in shy, melancholy men going up treadworn stairs to their rooms and in the same men planted out in rows at the Senate voting 'non placet' to every new measure. Though it would be unfair to give this vision the total lie, Oxford and Cambridge can sometimes assimilate new ideas with remarkable speed. The cinema in education is scarcely now a new idea, but in the use of films for higher education and research, Cambridge has recently given the lead to other universities and colleges in this country. That is not to say the question mark can be cut from my title or even that films are being made and used on a large scale, but there certainly is a wind on the heath.

#### Film is used

A number of departments use films for teaching and research at the present time. The Zoological laboratory has made studies of the movement of fish, invertebrates and ciliates. the Physiology department has produced a film on the technique of perfusing a rabbit's heart that has cut down the number of fiascos in the practical class, while the micro-biological films made at the Strangeways laboratory are already well-known outside Cambridge, Since biology is so much concerned with the study of movement and growth, biologists have been quick to seize on the film as a valuable aid. It is, however, the Engineering laboratory which has made the most extensive use of films as part of the regular academic course. First and second year students in this laboratory have a weekly cinema hour in which they are shown not only films covering many aspects of engineering but also sociological films, such as The City, likely to be of interest to them. The students are asked to grade the films according to quality of presentation and pedagogue value. The great majority of the films shown come from outside sources, but a few have recently been made in the laboratory.

It is not possible to give a detailed account here, but in many other branches of science, and also in economics and history films are either being used now or there is interest in their immediate possibilities.

#### More apparatus needed

If films are to be made and shown on an increasing scale, more projectors must be made available. It is a fact not always recognized that if you give a man a projector and he has any liking at all for gadgets, he will pretty soon look for something to run through it. A few months ago the University spent quite a large sum on the purchase of film equipment, so that

now every department houses or has easy access to a projector.

But though we now have the means to show any number of films there are extremely few known to be of the required academic standard. Of many that perhaps exist, we have only the titles and of some not even that. It was the common need for information, for technical advice and for co-operation between different departments that led a number of lecturers, research workers and students to form the Educational Film Council at Cambridge in February of last year. After a good deal of factfinding and propaganda, the Council has been recognized by the University to the extent that a yearly amount is paid as a joint subscription from all departments and the General Board of the Faculties appoints a representative to the executive committee. The Council soon realized that although it could do valuable work at Cambridge, even in the interests of Cambridge a more widespread organization was needed to gather information efficiently and to deal with such matters as training in film technique, the import of foreign films and cooperation in film-making between universities to cut and share out costs. At the invitation of the Council, a conference was convened by the British Film Institute and the Scientific Film Association last November. This resulted in the establishment of a Universities Film Council for the British Isles.

#### Not enough films

If all the films at present hidden away in private libraries, laboratory cupboards and professorial safes were made available we should be a little better off than we are now, but there would still be an enormous shortage of films suitable for university teaching and research. And studio-made films today cost the earth. One way of lowering costs is to use 'library material'. For example, historical films of considerable value could probably be made largely from newsreels. This use of material made in the first place for another purpose could also be planned ahead, so that in making say popular scientific or instructional films, extra shots might be taken and a film constructed suitable for academic purposes.

Many valuable films could be made cheaply and simply in the University and, as we have said, to some extent this is being done already. But there are shortages of equipment and trained personnel. Cambridge, or indeed any university, is unwilling to spend money on what they regard as non-essentials. Ergo cameras and so on will only be purchased when a loud enough noise is made by departments whose actual projects are held up for want of equipment. The training of research workers in film-making is now under consideration and the national Universities Film

Council intends next year to arrange a summer school in cinematograph technique.

The Cambridge Council at first decided to advise on matters of film-making only when advice was asked for and not to take a more active and direct part. This was done in order not to offend departments hyper-sensitive to outside interference. It soon became apparent, however, that without active encouragement and suggestion very few films would be made at or for the University within the next few years. After attempts to obtain money from outside sources for academic film-making in general had understandably failed, the Council turned its attention to specific projects. A letter was sent to departments and faculty boards asking for details of films they intended to make or would like to see made. A number of positive replies have already been received. Soon the Council will be in a position to seek financial and other support for concrete propositions and to facilitate joint efforts in filmmaking with other universities. A few months ago a professor at the University of Utrecht wrote to the Council suggesting that some educational films should be made in Britain and Holland in such a way that they could be used in both countries. And if co-operation with Holland, then also with other countries in Europe and beyond.

#### The final aim

The 'ultimate aim' of the Council is the 'establishment by the University of a Film Centre with adequate facilities for the production, projection and storage of educational films'. To this end a memorandum was submitted to the General Board of the Faculties outlining the first suggested steps. This memorandum has had useful indirect effects, but no direct action has been taken on the lines laid out.

There is not going to be a Film Centre at Cambridge yet awhile, and there will not be one until more lecturers and research workers have taken an active part in making films and have a clearer idea of where and how they are going. But more and more films are going to be made, for people are coming to see both that language is not always the ideal medium for communicating academic ideas and that the cinema will not make an end to books. Indeed the Cambridge University Press has experimented with short film sequences as illustration for text-books and may go farther. In time the University must also sponsor research on films, for while it is relatively easy, given adequate technique, to make a film on biological cell division that all will see alike, different people may gain very different ideas from one that aims to portray the social background to Balkan history and who knows how many lessons are to be learnt from Battleship Potem-

#### A NEW MEDICAL FILM

reviewed by

#### A DOCTOR

LAST YEAR there was the biggest epidemic of acute anterior poliomyelitis we have ever had in this country. At the height of that epidemic the Ministry of Health issued a 20-minute film Poliomyelitis 1947, to help general practitioners with early diagnosis of the illness. Thanks to the co-operation of the Central Office of Information projection service, that film was seen by 17,000 doctors and as many nurses in three weeks. The new film Polio Diagnosis and Management is a more ambitious film intended to be completed in time for any possible epidemic in this or future years. With digressions, it tells the story of a young man who gets acute anterior poliomyelitis and is treated and finally returns to work. The film starts with tables showing the amount of the illness in various places of recent years and goes on to mention how in a family some have merely fever and headache while others have the obvious illness with paralysis. Then we see a young man visit his doctor's surgery; the doctor gives him aspirin and sees him next day; suspects poliomyelitis and calls the Medical Officer of Health; he examines him and removes him to hospital, explaining the outlook to the family of the patient. The various types of muscle paralysis in this illness are demonstrated and the progress of the patient followed through to his building-up exercises and finally his return to work, still under supervision.

The film is designed for general practitioners and gives a good survey of the progress of a case with a suitable emphasis on the necessity of continuing treatment until and after the patient is back at work. It lasts 60 minutes and is very well photographed, directed and cut.

When one comes to ask what it is for, then



The still from the Polio film shows the Doctor testing the patient

problems crop up. If it is designed as a documentary to arouse the interest of general practitioners, it is surely reasonable to answer that any good general practitioner learnt enough during the excitement of last year's epidemic to give him a good working knowledge of the disease for the next few years.

If it is designed as an instructional film for young GPs, then it is wide open to criticism. As a patient I expect if I go to a GP complaining of a pain in the neck, he will examine my neck to see what is the matter with it: actually I expect that at any first visit my doctor will ask me to take off my shirt and lie down to be properly

examined. In this film, the patient at the surgery is sent home without any proper examination; the next day the GP gives a cursory examination without testing the knee jerks with a hammer, and calls in the MOH who makes a rather inconsequent examination. Then we have repetitive sequences on the damages to various muscles.

The film is an example of the short-sighted economy of the film makers at the Central Office of Information. One does not expect the Ministry of Health to know how to make good teaching films. One does expect the COI to. Until they realize that to make a good teaching film you need a good teacher as well as a good film director and a good technical expert, the chances of getting good teaching films from COI will remain low.

There is at present no need for a documentary on acute anterior poliomyelitis for doctors. There is quite a good case for one for the public. Last year's film had bad titles but said two or three things about early diagnosis clearly and left time for discussion. The early parts of this year's film are like any US film. The shots of a lecturer and of his chart are not film, they are film strip material.

But what is needed from COI is a number of shorter, more modest films on the common illnesses, rheumatism, tuberculosis, whooping cough, and so on. The film is an expensive medium and in our impoverished condition we cannot afford yet to deal intensively with a rare malady such as acute anterior poliomyelitis.

Polio Diagnosis and Management will be a useful and popular addition to the films for general-practitioners.



From the new Crown monthly release 'School in Cologne'

#### The Film \*

Polio Diagnosis and Management, 1948. Made by Crown Film Unit. *Director:* Geoffrey Innes. *Photography:* Jonah Jones.

# Gregg Toland, Film-maker

Part 2

Reprinted by kind permission of the 'Screen Writer'

GREGG is a man with opinions who is not afraid to air them, and as a result he is not known for his ability to make himself popular with other cameramen. Recently Gregg showed me a telegram he sent to a very well-known colleague of his. In it, he deflated that gentleman considerably for taking credit in a magazine article for a 'new' development in lighting technique. Gregg pointed out how ridiculous his colleague's claim was, and added that he himself had used the same 'new' technique several years before.

'I hope —— has a sense of humour,' Gregg said.

'I think he'll need more than a sense of humour. He isn't going to like you very much when he sees this.'

'Well, that's all right,' Gregg said, grinning. 'I do this sort of thing all the time. They resent it, but they're probably used to it by now.'

In response to my questions, Gregg gave me a few of his views which have not served to endear him to members of the ASC. 'In my opinion,' he stated, 'there are about twenty really top cameramen in the world. I would say that about twelve of them are in Hollywood. The others run from "adequate" to "use only if necessary".'

'What's the trouble with them?' I asked.

'Well, most of them take the road of least resistance. They do whatever is easiest. But worse than that, I think too few cameramen realize dramatic and story values. They don't keep abreast of current plays and books. Their interest seems to centre mainly on how late a call I can manage in the morning to how early can we finish today.'

'We hear many criticisms about Hollywood's lack of maturity in terms of story material,' I pointed out, 'but it is taken for granted that the technical job Hollywood does is the finest in the world. How does this fit in with what you just said?'

'I disagree that all our technical jobs are done as well as they can be done. For instance, I feel that too many cameramen are apt to work out a certain key which they can handle, and then photograph everything, tragedy or comedy, in the same way. They don't work to adapt their style to their story. Furthermore, cameramen often have ideas which might entail extra work on their part, and which they don't suggest to the director for that reason. I'll give you a theoretical example which will give you some idea of what I mean:

'Supposing the script indicates a group of partisans making plans for a raid. In the far corner is the leader's girl. She listens, worried.

'One approach to this might be a group shot



"A girl is often so old by the time she proves her ability that out comes the burlaps in front of the lens."

and several tighter shots, always with the leader as the focal point. The director might plan to make cuts of the girl listening. Now, the cameraman might suddenly think, "It would be better to start with a group, slowly move past intent faces, with the leader always in the background. The camera nears the leader and then slowly pans into a big close-up of the girl. We see how upset she is, and we dissolve on her doubt." Our cameraman thinks that might be swell, but does he bring it up? Well, let's see: it would mean a large problem in lighting faces with lights that would miss a camera shadow. It would involve focus of foreground faces and background faces; also a problem of sliding diffusion as the camera pans to the girl; also he probably couldn't get the light exactly where he wanted it for the girl due to camera movement. So, does he mention it? No, indeed. Why stick out his neck? Even though his idea would have furthered the dramatic tension of the scene and planted the girl's worry more pointedly, our cameraman will go along with the no more than adequate idea of the director. That's what I mean by taking the path of least resistance.

'Okay,' I said, 'suppose all you've said is true. It is particularly the fault of the individual cameraman, or is there a deeper fault?'

'Yes, I think there is,' Gregg said. 'A great many of the stories we make aren't very stimulating. Sometimes you wonder why they're made at all. That's not a great inducement to do your best work. I know when it's been my misfortune to have to photograph one of those run-of-the-mill pictures, I've been pretty unhappy. There's absolutely no opportunity for ideas. I've said to my wife, "I feel just like a whore, doing it for money. If I had any guts, I'd quit this picture and we would go down to Rio, or some place." But you never do. You just keep on hoping that the next opportunity will be better. I suppose that's the human weakness of comfort and security.'

'You sound exactly like any number of

writers who've had to write that stuff you didn't like,' I told him.

'Well, they haven't got any monopoly on frustrations, you know.'

'I'm sure it'll make them much happier to hear that. By the way, what about writers in relation to cameramen. Do you think closer liaison is practical?'

'Definitely,' said Gregg. 'The cameraman should be asked to sit down with a lot of other people on the picture *before* production, and that would include the writer. I am positive that great production economies can be effected by cameramen and writers discussing the script.'

'Here's a question a lot of writers would like to have answered: What happens to the camera directions they put into their screenplays in capital letters? You know, CAMERA MOVES SLOWLY TO, HIGH ANGLE SHOT, CAMERA TRUCKS, MEDIUM CLOSE, REVERSE TWO SHOT BUD PAST BEULAH, and so on?'

'The answer to that is pretty simple. Directors and cameramen over the years have developed a method of reading scripts so they do not see these directions at all.'

'Is that your last word on the subject?'

'No, the director can't work out staging and mechanics in his office, so why should the writer worry about trucking shots, panning shots, boom shots and all the rest? Usually he's talking about a subject of which he has a very limited knowledge. (Although I'll grant most writers have had no opportunity to learn.) Writers like Sherwood write in master scenes, and don't go into detailed camera instructions. That's the way it should be. My advice to writers, especially the younger ones who are feeling their way in the medium, would be to concentrate their worrying on the content of the scene and the dialogue.'

AMONG other factors which keep cameramen from doing more creative work, Gregg includes the unimaginative quality of a great deal of directing. There are quite a few old-fashioned, tired directors who are still coasting on past reputations. And there are also quite a few directors who find it difficult to work up much enthusiasm for run-of-the-mill assignments, and are content with doing a routine job of turning pieces of paper into pieces of celluloid.

'When you're working with a director with no enthusiasm for what he's doing, it's hard for the cameraman to get enthused,' Gregg said. 'If the director makes a two shot, and then a couple of close-ups, and plays every scene the same way, no cameraman in the world can exert much creative energy. And then there's the director who wants to make his set-ups "exciting" and tries to use a 30 mm lens all the time. This can drive a cameraman crazy, because you can't use a wide-angle lens without a knowledge of how and when to use it.

Or you get the director who wants to move his camera all the time. My own view is that there is a sensible point of view in between static set-ups and constant movement. I've gone to both extremes in Long Voyage Home and Citizen Kane. Now I think a better point of view has been reached with Willy in Best Years. We didn't have any preconceived rules; we moved when it seemed that helped tell the story best. Camera movement shouldn't be noticed, because it takes your attention from the actors, and what is happening to them. Yet, some directors, because a scene has a great deal of dialogue, have the extremely false notion that camera movement will make the scene appear to move. This doesn't help the cameraman any, either.'

Going on from these specific criticisms, Gregg feels that the industry in general should be criticized. He feels good pictures aren't being made, and he feels that you can't blame audiences. He has quite a healthy respect for the quality of the American audience, and doesn't believe that pictures have to be geared to the level of the twelve-year-old mind to be successful.

In general, his main criticism is, he believes pictures have lost reality and imagination. They are conventional in writing, direction and photography. One of his deep resentments is the star system.

'It means we are making pictures with a "personality" rather than story. That's why many cameramen are forced to sacrifice everything in order to keep some old bag playing young women. And when I say old bag, that's what I mean. A girl is often so old by the time she proves her ability that out comes the burlaps in front of the lens.

"The average producer will answer that he has to protect his investment. But why not protect it with a good story, script and director, and then cast it with the best actors for the parts, not box-office names. I know the answer to that one, too: "Pictures are a business for profit." So they are, but it would be fine oncein-a-time though, to see an honest motion picture.

'Aren't you tired of seeing some glamour star playing a shopgirl in New York, living in an apartment that would cost ten times her monthly salary, wearing dresses that she couldn't possibly afford, and with a hairdo that you can only get by coming to a movie studio and having a staff of specialists create for two hours before you come on the set?'

I admitted I was tired of it, and he sighed, 'I could go on and on, but why?'

'Well,' I said, 'partly because it's good to get it out of your system, and mostly because I want to know how you feel so I can write a proper interview.'

'In that case,' he said, 'I'll go on. A lot of people won't like this, but I think it's true. At least, it's the way I've seen it from the inside over a period of years. I think fewer creative pictures are being made these days as compared to 20 years ago because most of the people directly responsible are more smug and better paid. The unions protect many positions, where in the old days it was touch and go. In those days any youngster could start in the picture business, if he had the stuff, Salaries were much smaller, but I think there was a greater pride of achievement. Generally speaking, most people today have the attitude that everything has been tried and present methods are the best. Now, I'm not saying the back-lot people all have economic security, or even all the socalled creative or talent groups are living off the fat of the land. I'd say, though, that what an expensive audience of extra people. This is an example of what I said earlier, People out here no longer ponder; they no longer have the same challenges to meet. There is money enough, so they build enough set for safety—just in case they need it. And so it goes—everyone protects himself, and everything sails along just fine.

'Kane may not be a great picture, but I honestly believe it excited more comment and made more people snap out of their complacency than any other picture in years.

'By the way, I want to be sure to make this point. I have worked under contract to Samuel Goldwyn for many years and some people might have the mistaken notion that I am saying these things in criticism of him. That is definitely not the case. I sincerely believe that Goldwyn will allow me more freedom, more experiments and more ideas than anyone at the moment. I do not say this to protect my contented feeling, as Goldwyn may have my contract back any morning he chooses, and with-



If you're working with a director with no enthusiasm, it's hard for the cameraman to get enthused.

I've said is too true of the people who make the decisions, and who are in the last analysis responsible for what goes on in this town.

'Naturally, I don't speak of the few persons who have a burning desire to accomplish things, but who are usually held down by a production office or a producer with a "Why take a chance?".

'That's why making Citizen Kane was so wonderful. Orson Welles (who directed it) and I had a wonderful time. It was the first time I had encountered anyone with the authority to do anything and not be confronted by the front office. I suggested and tried things I'd been dreaming of for a long time.

'We made mistakes in it, but we also did a few startling things which people still discuss. I might add that one reason for many of the effects was a lack of money. We just couldn't afford to have an audience in the opera house when the camera was shooting from behind Dorothy Comingore, the singer. So we thought. I put up a series of baby shots in a black opera set and trained them at the camera. I believe that the ultimate effect was more desirable than

out a settlement, and he knows it. I say it because I believe he tries harder than any other person in this industry. This doesn't mean that he is always right, but he *tries*. I wish more people did.'

In Hollywood today, where the tendency is toward a standardized product, and toward conformity on all levels, citizens like Gregg Toland have a value far beyond their skills or techniques. As individualists, they have the ability to subordinate themselves and their work to the co-operative creative process. Yet they retain their personalities and identities. Because he has a personality, Gregg has personal opinions, and they are reflected in the pictures he makes, Too many people in Hollywood have given up the fight to retain their identities, and when asked for opinions, answer 'I can do it whichever way you want', rather than 'I think it would be better this way'. In a community where so many people are loth to speak their minds, men like Gregg are good to have around

He may not always be right, but at least he

# John Taylor

#### A Close-up

by

B. W.



EARLY in AD 1930 there entered the dingy cutting rooms of the EMB Film Unit (then three souls strong) a plump and repulsive small boy who had clearly graduated, multa cum laude, from Dr Will Hay's noted academy. This boy was soon voted impertinent as well as repulsive; he jammed the spike of a Debrie tripod on to J. D. Davidson's foot and knocked Grierson's hat (a very fine Borsalino) into the Thames near Gravesend. At that time the multitude and variety of bad ends prognosticated, and even desired, for this young gentleman were remarkable. Few of those who came perforce and reluctantly into contact with him realized (a) that he was working out of his system a grouch against human-kind caused by his forced entry into films as an alternative to running away to sea, and (b) that the adolescent tortures he so skilfully inflicted on his superiors were the first signs of that strength of character which, with the passing of the years, made him the most reliable, courageous and persistent member of the documentary movement in Great Britain.

It would be difficult to find so far a cry as that from our first impressions of this foul urchin to the solid figure we know today as John Taylor (his middle name, you may care to know, is Elston), producer-in-charge of the Crown Film Unit, creator of Realist, married man with two uproarious children (his wife is Barbara Mullen), and proprietor of an impressive estate which is somewhat cluttered up not only by extensive asparagus beds but also by the micro-manipulator and other accessories of Photomicrography Ltd—another Taylor creation.

To be quite truthful, only a short period elapsed between John's press-ganging into documentary and his emergence as a valuable addition to a movement whose speed of development in those early days called for great intensity of work and an enthusiasm for films which some contemporary technicians might well emulate. John became a good camera-assistant, a good cutter, and a good getter-on-with-any-job. He was assistant to Flaherty during the period of Industrial Britain, and if you get him and Golightly into a good mood they will tell you what happened in Birmingham one autumn evening in 1931. He so impressed Flaherty that he was pinched from the EMB and worked on Man of Aran from beginning to end. For the record, let it be remembered that John Taylor, who was still quite a kid, ran the location laboratory which Flaherty set up in Aran, and that the bulk of the negative passed through his hands.

He came back from his Irish sojourn both wiser and wilder. Almost immediately he had to buy a dinner jacket and a tropical outfit and go on location in Ceylon where, thanks to careful arranging, he never had to carry anything heavier

than the superbly equipped Leica which Flaherty had given him after the Aran film. Again for the record, let it be remembered that the enormously comprehensive set of stills of most aspects of Ceylon—many of which dealt with subjects not in the film—were entirely his work; and that as a location organizer he proved magnificent.

Round about this time John began to feel that his education had been too rudely interrupted by the claims of documentary, and with everyone's blessing and approval he took a year off and studied the Arts, etcetera, at the University of Edinburgh. John has always had an instinctive and indeed uncannily accurate appreciation of true values, with the result that the academic opportunities of Edinburgh were quickly and usefully absorbed, and he acquired one of the few attributes he had hitherto lacked -the ability of organized thinking. To this he shortly added a pungent, individual and effective prose style which he should employ (at least in the interests of documentary journalism) much more frequently than he does.

At this period, too, he emerged as a film director. Eastwards he flew, shooting with Strand for

Imperial Airways at Bahrein, and then, in solitary state but with Arthur Elton's blessing, directing and photographing that extraordinary study of an oriental country on to which a dictator was billposting Western technologies—Dawn of Iran.

Then, with Elton and Anstey, he worked (and how he worked) on *Housing Problems*. On this film he was partnered on location by the everlamented Ruby Grierson. This partnership continued on many films afterwards, culminating in that lovely and simple film of the early war days —*They Also Serve*, which, in effect, they made together.

Reverting, however, to chronology, John then joined Realist as a director and made *The Smoke Menace* and *The Londoners*. The latter was one of the first feature-length dramatized documentaries, and people might as well realize right now that John's reconstructions of Victorian London—done in a small studio and not with all that amount of money—still match up to a lot of much more elaborate stuff which has come out of the camera in subsequent and more luxurious days.

It was about this time that the then producer and managing director of Realist, convinced that the journey to Carey Street was imminent, presented the tottering firm to John Taylor, and fled to the flesh pots of Film Centre. Since that day Realist has never looked back. During the war years it became the focal point of forthright production-so much so that some of its best films were consigned to the deepest oubliettes of the MOI immediately the show-copy was ready. In the war years John, with Frank Sainsbury and Max Anderson as constant aides and boon companions, was responsible for an output of films whose variety, high standards, and integrity could not be equalled by any other unit. This happened because John Taylor made himself become a really superb producer. Commanding then, as he does now, the absolute loyalty, confidence and respect of those who work with him, he built up at Realist a team of film-makers (and a very large one at that) which was-and still is under Brian Smith-pretty nearly unbeatable.

Today he is at Crown—the first producer of that Unit to show not the slightest sign of a nervous breakdown. His appointment to this post was significant. John Taylor has never sought, nor pretended to, the frills and furbelows of civil service diplomacies. He frequently appears to be almost inarticulate—a Machiavellian tactic which has caused many a fly Whitehallite to bite the dust. For John knows very well what he is up to; he is after producing the best films on the most-needed subjects, and behind what ap-

(Continued foot of column 3, opposite page)

# Notes on the Institut

des

### Hautes Études Cinématographiques

by Ruth Partington

IDHEC's own official publications state clearly its aim and activities, describe its methods, and syllabus. They show how a hundred or so students. French and foreign, are selected and given a two or three years' training to prepare them to realize ambitions to be director, producer, sound engineer, cameraman, decorator, costume designer, cutter or script girl. The public relations side of IDHEC's work may be judged from its programme of outside lectures and projections; members of the general public may also obtain permission to use the library, and may buy IDHEC's publications, the Cahiers and the Bulletin. So perhaps more personal impressions, gained as if for a documentary treatment over a period of months, would be more useful in 'bringing alive' this training school for film workers, an exciting experiment.

Its students only number about a hundred all told and are concentrated into a converted house with library, studio, lecture rooms and practical workshops of small dimensions. Perhaps this accounts for the personal and lively atmosphere of the place by comparison with the Sorbonne for instance where thousands of students arrive and disperse every day. Or perhaps IDHEC students are all film fanatics devoted to the same drug? Certainly the student community on the fringe of the film world is small; one meets the same people at cinė-clubs all over Paris, at the Cinėmatheque and in specialized libraries and at amateur cinéma-circles.

But IDHEC itself is the focal point of this world and provides a bridge with the activity of film making. This possibility of contact with film critics and creators is at least as important as the more academic side of the programme. The actual usefulness of the full week's timetable of lectures on literature, history, geography, aesthetics, in relation to the cinema, as well as film history and practice, may be doubted more than its excellent intention. But the value of direct and frequent contact with films and film authorities is at once evident. The staff itself is outstanding; Léon Moussinac, new director of the school, is one of the most profound of French film critics, well known for his books on the Soviet cinema and the film in general as well as for his poetry and fictional writing. He is assisted by Jean Lods, one of France's few established documentary film makers. Among authorities lecturing regularly on their subjects are Georges Sadoul and Jean Mitry on film history. But the circles spread wider Part of the regular week's programme, shared by first and second year students are the Tuesday projection of a new film by its director, and Monday evening lecture projections by a visitor, alternating with a session in the special documentary series that has been given this winter. The visiting speakers,

critics or directors are ready to give explanations and answer questions from this small specialized audience. The meetings are often extraordinarily interesting and valuable. Giuseppe da Santis showing Caccia Tragica, René Clément showing extracts from his early documentation La Grande Pastorale and Ceux du Rail, as well as from La Bataille du Rail and Les Maudits, the critic Andre Bazin discussing the subject of realism and reality, Jean Lods explaining his methods in the documentary studies of artists at work, Maillol and Aubussou, Jacques Dupont's films of pygmy Africa brought back from an ethnological expedition, are only a few isolated examples. As IDHEC grows older and more ex-students are making films, this contact between film workers and IDHEC is bound to increase. Conversely, IDHEC's impact on the film world will grow, in many countries presumably. I have met students from Sweden, Bulgaria, Palestine, Egypt, Poland, Canada, the United States, and other countries as well as France.

The 'foreign students' have often had some previous practical experience, and so tend to be

older than their French counterparts, and more ready to criticize the lack of sufficient practical training provided by the present material resources of IDHEC. In fact the programme of the school seems bound to develop a critical sense, but its effect on creative ability is less obvious.

Any straightforward description of IDHEC inevitably begs many questions—the aesthetic question of the effect of prolonged theoretical training on artistic ability, as raised by Dovjenkho on the subject of the Soviet film academy, and the economic question as emphasized by the present crisis in French film production. But it can at least be said that a film worker coming from IDHEC has developed his general culture. acquired a formidable film culture and critical sense, learnt the technical use of his tools at IDHEC and during a probationary period in commercial studios and seen how other men have used them. The next stage, his use of them where he finds opportunity, to make poetry or publicity or what he will, is the test of the individual and of his training and will be seen more clearly as more students graduate into active production.

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#### JOHN TAYLOR (cont.)

pears so often as a quiet and amiable facade there is a toughness and a persistence which few operators in the field can overcome. His producership of Crown can be reckoned as the best thing which has happened to that Unit since it used to live at Blackheath and called itself GPO.

And now, children, you will want to know about Taylor the Man. From one angle that is easy. He is quite good at darts, an excellent swimmer, likes, but is useless at, fishing, is devoted to music hall, is one of the greatest living experts on the art of W. C. Fields, drinks Guinness with pleasure, and, if you have the good fortune to achieve such an honour, is the best friend you are ever likely to acquire in all your puff. But from another angle he is less easy to describe. His close friends realize that he keeps a special and secret John L. Taylor locked deep inside himself -a tough baby, and as honest as Adam before the fall. It is from this secret recess that there emerges that absolute integrity which makes him of such unique value to documentary.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

**Agricultural Films** 

SIR,

'Technician's' tetchy article on the SFA Films in Agriculture Conference has had at least one valuable result. It has stimulated Mr Mervyn Reeves into writing some valid and useful criticism, in your May 1948 issue.

As he says, we have few if any objective data about rural audiences, their rate of and capacity for film assimilation, their comparative response to sound and silent films, their views on commentators, and so on. Facts on all these and other similar points would be of great value to film-makers (who genuinely prefer to do a useful rather than a useless job) and to the people in the Ministries, COI, NAAS, and other organizations who have to suggest, commission, supervise and use the films.

Two questions now arise, and I ask them not with the object of scoring any debating points, but because I want to know the answers.

(a) Whose job is it to get these facts?

(b) How is he going to get them?

It is no good saying 'How nice it would be to have some facts!' and then sitting back. If it would be as nice as all that, then they have to be got. Getting them is going to occupy some man-hours. Man-hours cost money. Therefore, somebody, or some body, has got to make itself responsible—has got to assume the financial and moral burden of getting the facts, interpreting them and making them available? Who, or what, is the correct, competent and willing body to do this?

Granted that the work is to be done, the question of method has to be tackled. The facts must be facts, not subjective and contradictory personal impressions. The technique of this kind of fact-finding is not very highly developed at present, and analogous work in the entertainment and child-education film fields has yielded some results which are susceptible to more than one interpretation. I venture to suggest that no acceptable standards against which audience-reaction results can be measured for significance and validity have yet

been devised. The very methods of experimentation are yet in their infancy.

Investigation will have to be carried out on a fairly large scale if results are to be reliable, because there are a large number of variables involved, not all of which are exactly measurable—statistical levelling is, therefore, necessary. Further, I have the impression that the reactions of audiences to, at any rate, the instructional kinds of film change rather rapidly with the number of films seen. If this is true it suggests that the fact-finding ought properly to be regarded as a continuing rather than a oncefor-all job.

I am not saying all this with the object of discouraging fact-finders. My point is that useful fact-finding is not going to be dead easy, and I rather suspect that even when the facts have been found they will be somewhat difficult to interpret.

The job ought to be started, and the sooner the better, but I think we must not expect a golden shower of understandable results in the first week or two.

Yours faithfully.

JOHN SHEARMAN

355a Finchley Road Hampstead, NW3

How, What and Why

SIR: Having seen the film *How*, *What and Why* reviewed in your June number, I feel that I must take issue with your reviewer on the item concerned with the pulse.

'No indication,' he says, 'is given at the end of the significance of the difference of pulse rate with which the doctor is concerned.' What, indeed, would he have in a three minute item

designed for children?

But perhaps he does not know that the significance of pulse variations (in which rhythm and volume are concerned just as much as rate) is a complex subject which could fill quite a large text-book? In a film of this type it would be impossible to make any statement which would not be misleading or inaccurate without qualification. Quite rightly the film-makers re-

fused to attempt it and confined themselves (at the end!) to the statement that the pulse varied in health and disease, and that these variations gave the doctor an indication of the state of health of the body. That, surely, is answer enough for a twelve-year-old. So far from indicating careless scripting, this particular item seems to me to illustrate the precise reverse.

Yours etc.,
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1947 Edinburgh

'Modern Guide to Health' (COI)

1948 Paris (the first all-cartoon Festival)

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VOL. 7 NO. 68 AUGUST 1948

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#### REPORT FROM EDINBURGH

The First Week

by Stephen Ackroyd

as a stood in Princes Street last Saturday, the evening before the second International Festival of Music and Drama was due to begin, and looked up at the castle, which dominates the city of Edinburgh—the castle whose grim outlines would soon be dissolved by the magic of floodlight—I confess that I had a moment of doubt. Could Edinburgh in 1948 repeat the success of 1947? The answer came soon enough. Packed houses, enthusiastic audiences, and that fantastic, carefree, carnival atmosphere, which alone of our cities Edinburgh could have conjured up, these are all here again—and this time to stay; for it is now unthinkable that this great International Festival should not have a permanent place in the cultural events of our island.

That the Documentary Film is a part of this festival should be a matter of great pride to all who are concerned in its future, and all documentary workers owe a deep debt of gratitude to the City of Edinburgh and to the Edinburgh Film Guild to whom is due the credit for the whole conception of the documentary festival, and who have done such a magnificent job in organizing it.

For the significance of the Edinburgh Documentary Festival does not lie only in the fact that here we are able to study, to exchange experiences, and to learn from the work of fellow documentary film-makers from many countries; it is also in the fact that here, beside the arts of Music and Drama, Documentary stands as a medium on its own. Here, seen by an international audience, is the work of men and women from all over the world who strive, like ourselves, to express in film the factual realities of our time. It is in this realization of the truly international character of the Documentary idea that the real significance of the Edinburgh Film Festival lies, and which makes this event one of the most exciting and stimulating of experiences.

A detailed survey of the films shown at the Festival will be published in our next issue—today at the end of the first week it is only possible to touch on a few of the high-lights so far.

Opened by Sir Michael Balcon, who had some pertinent remarks to make about the new Film Finance Corporation, the Festival began last Sunday with a world première in the Caley Cinema of Robert Flaherty's fine new film, *The Louisiana Story*. I wish that those distributors and exhibitors who have such a low opinion of the tastes of the British public could have been there to watch this huge audience, made up for the most part of the ordinary men and women of Edinburgh, held spellbound by the beauty and the poetry

of Flaherty's handling of this story of a small French-Canadian boy, simple and superstitious, brought up among the wilds of the Louisiana swamp-land, who is suddenly thrown into contact with the mechanized monsters of our oil-seeking civilization. This is a film to see and to flavour again. Preceding this were three short films, A Divided World—a new film from Sweden by Sucksdorff, about which no more need be said than that it is a worthy successor to The Shadows Over Snow, which created such a sensation last year; The Vain Bear—a delightful colour cartoon from Russia; and Dranma di Christo—a film about the paintings of Giotto, which demonstrated again the mastery and skill of present-day Italian documentary film-makers.

On Monday began the twice-daily performances in the Guild Theatre; to select is invidious, but, leaving aside Britain, which is well represented, from among foreign films mention may be made of Men of the Mists, the first Bulgarian film to be seen in this country; of a remarkable experiment in the use of film for critical assessment, The World of Paul Delvaux by Henri Storck from Belgium; Les Santons, a ballet film from France contrasting with our own Steps of the Ballet; of Ditte Child of Man, Henning-Jensen's moving story of the tragedy of illegitimacy; The Loon's Necklace from Canada—an Indian legend, brilliantly reconstructed with native masks; Goemons from France—a fine if depressing study of life on a barren island where seaweed is gathered; of La Rose et le Reseda, a setting of an Aragon poem from France; Zoo di Petra, another Italian film dealing this time with sculpture; The Dragon of Cracow, a delightful puppet film from Poland; Sacrifice, a grim but fine study of primitive blood rites from Sweden; Chinese Shadow Play—a delightful study of one of the oldest forms of entertainment in the world. To these could be added the first examples of documentary films to be seen here from Austria, Spain, Eire and many others, together with the first Yugoslav feature Slavitza. Tomorrow sees the first showing of a new film about Edinburgh itself, The Waverley Steps, in an all Scottish programme at the Caley Cincma, and in the evening the première in this country of Roberto Rossellini's new film, Germany Year Zero. Next week the programme resumes at Guild House until Wednesday, and will be repeated from September 2 to 11. Besides which there are additional films on Sundays, special cducational film shows and a separate showing of children's films. Apart from the films there are biweekly lectures by well-known speakers on various aspects of the documentary film, and an exhibition of stills showing the development of the documentary technique.

Last year the Documentary Festival was a small, though important, 'side-show' to the main Festival. This year it is an integral part, in its own right, of this unique and moving event.

I cannot leave the subject of Edinburgh without a word on the broader picture. Whether or not one's main interest is films, no one can afford to miss a visit to this great and beautiful city during these three weks. At a time when the world is again closing around us, hag-ridden with fear, we can refresh our spirits and find a new hope for the future in this international feast of beauty which is spread in bewildering profusion before us.

In no other city and at no other time in this island can one find, from so many countries, cheek by jowl, opera, ballet, drama. films. art exhibitions and music, music of the people and of the world's greatest artists, and above all perhaps such a cosmopolitan mixture of men and women laughing, experiencing, and enjoying these things—and this in a setting which matches worthily the event. These things, the music, the films, the drama can, it is true, be seen or heard singly in other places. but here, together, they add up to something which transcends them all.

As I write, trumpeters in scarlet and gold are coming out of the Assembly Hall to stand on the Mount and blow their call out over the city to the people in Edinburgh—and beyond them to the people of the world—to gather to hear Tyrone Guthrie's magnificent production of Sir David Lindsay's 16th century morality play, Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaits. Lindsay would have been proud of Edinburgh today.

Edinburgh, August 26

#### THE ARNOT ROBERTSON FUND

on Tuesday, July 27, the Court of Appeal allowed an appeal by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures Ltd. from an award of £1,500 damages made to Miss E. Arnot Robertson when she sued the company for libel and slander following a letter sent by MGM to the BBC Director of Talks suggesting that she was out of touch with the tastes and entertainment requirements of the picture-going public and that 'her criticisms are, on the whole, unnecessarily harmful to the film industry'. (The hearing of this original case began in the King's Bench Division before Mr Justice Hilbery and a Special Jury on July 16, 1947.)

Immediately the result of the Appeal became known, the Film Section of the Critics' Circle announced through its Hon. Secretary, Milton Deane, that it would launch forthwith a Fund to assist Miss Arnot Robertson with the costs of her action, estimated at £5,000. A Fighting Fund would also be established to enable Miss Robertson

to take her case to the Lords. In his statement to the Press Mr Deane said: 'We feel that a case of this sort where the original judgment, with a jury, is overturned on strictly legal points, the whole future of free and responsible criticism is in jeopardy. This new judgment might well give encouragement to all those purely commercial interests in the Cincma which would like to see Press criticism muzzled and intimidated. In the end it is the public, whom the critics serve, who will suffer.'

As soon as the establishment of the Fund was announced, contributions in large and small amounts started coming in from all over the country, and one well-wisher undertook to double any subscription received up to £1,000.

Contributions should be made payable to Mr Milton Deane, and sent to him at I Garrick Mansions, Charing Cross Road, WC2.

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# Edinburgh 1948

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# John Grierson

THE EDINBURGH show this month is going to be a big show and an important one, and we will go into that later. To keep the decencies and the proportions, I should begin by saying that the Edinburgh show was always a big show anyway.

This year as last it is a Festival with pictures from everywhere and of all kinds, stretching all across and inside the denotation and connotation of the documentary thing. Twenty-seven countries are showing, they say, and the best is present. Bob Flaherty is there with his new one, Louisiana Story, and yet another brilliant evocation of the damn fool sense of innocence this wonderful old character pursues: his eye keener than ever, sensibility ever softer and so on, and Frances still around. Rossellini is there with his Berlin Zero and a turning camera on cat-feet which should interest the longshotmidshot-close-up boys in their technical vitals. Canada, bless the Chinook wind which thaws its winters, presents itself in the rough and tough European time with perhaps the best of all reportage items on European itself. It had no reason, except in its native and national generosity, to make it at all. France is there with the brilliant edition by Nicole Vedrès of the Edwardian years of Fallière: not so much nostalgic as witty and civilized. Norway is there with its big Nordic tale of Norwegian wartime bravery in the Battle of Heavy

Documentary looks quite a thing in the Edinburgh programme, as though it really was an idea that had started something, in reportage and interpretation, inside countries and across boundaries, for the illumination of much.

But—and I have been holding the but on a now longish string— Edinburgh isn't an accident in all this. It might have been Geneva and wasn't, or New York and wasn't, or Paris and wasn't. It might have been Warsaw and wasn't; and that is an item all by itself of which more will be heard.

The point is that Edinburgh has served the documentary idea from its inception with more continuity, more common sense, more constructive effort in film societies, film clubs, cinema quarterlies and whatnot, and more of the stuff that it takes when it comes to the critical punches than any other city. If there is a centre today which deserves more than any other to be regarded as the city where our wares can all-properly be shown and our accounts kept, it is surely this place in the north, with its rock behind it and its fuddy-duddy old sense that there might be sin itself in pursuing the shadow instead of the substance.

For all this we are indebted to a few unique characters who really believed it all from the first, and simply, and by sheer strength of their own sense of service, became the conscience of an idea which could all too easily have slipped without them.

Just to mark out the group and put it on this all too inadequate record, let us note down the central names of Norman Wilson, Forsyth Hardy and Charlic Oakley. Now that it is all a big, big show and everyone takes it for granted, let us note also that even in this latest stage of international coming together and being constructive and real about international coming together, documentary is still their local theirs.

It has been hard work for them over the years. They were not film

men and had no reason, except in their faith in others, to give their time, energy and organizing capacity to the service of those of us who drew the dough and took the bows. I hope, in this year's Festival, they have the feeling that they have matured a personal work of great and unselfish order, worth a dozen and one sentimental and uncreative excursions into international necking.

For British documentary itself the occasion is especially important. It is easy to knock British documentary around at this moment and say that it looked a poor stick and a sad squirt at Brussels last year and that Roberto on the other hand is wonderful, which he certainly is. But it should be equally easy to remember, if the will is there and if the smartypants and the people we will always henceforth remember as our 'warm admirers' can think in proportion, that British documentary is still much the biggest operation in the whole international set-up.

In its very size it has its special problems which should at this stage be respected and worked on: of organization, of finding pattern within an extending field, of keeping its eye on an ever more difficult but more real aesthetic ball, of renewing and refreshing its political sense in the light of new circumstances, of maintaining its original fervour in the discovery of new talents and in the provision of experimental opportunity for them.

All this will appear in Edinburgh, or should, as the stuff of the world goes across the Scottish screens. It will be simple for the side-liners to go ooh! aah! with Flaherty. It will be much more difficult to note that single swallows don't make a summer and that, whatever the present weather may be like, our scollectively is certainly a summer.

Therefore the meeting of the documentary people themselves, with the thrashing out of their problems, their needs and their shortcomings, is going to be one of the more important occasions at Edinburgh and in the history of the documentary development. Wright on national documentary, Elton on international documentary, Pearson on colonial documentary, Alexander on second feature documentary, Rotha on documentary's influence on feature production, Manvell on the aesthetic of documentary, have together the opportunity of bringing the whole thing into new focus and fit for the size of the privilege which national needs and international implications have brought it.

They have a task of leadership to attempt more momentous than at any time before. They have the great new problems of peacetime to face up to and definition to make of what documentary has to give in illumination of the technological, scientific, colonial, international and, in general, economic changes which are upon

For presenting the documentary effort everywhere, for reminding us that documentary is not only an established medium of public service but a medium continually revealing new forces and requiring new efforts, all of us in its profession must be grateful for the screen and the platform which Edinburgh now so handsomely provides us. One suspects that it comes easily to the capital of a country which for six centuries has given so much encouragement to so many adventurers that it quite reasonably suffers the illusion of being the capital of the world.



# 1948 Congress of World Union of Documentary



# Reported on

by

# Donald Alexander and Basil Wright

1HERE was no iron curtain; only cloud covering all Europe, and blotting out every frontier we crossed.

At Prague Air Terminal (so fast had been the crossing, so reasonable and smooth the formalities at the airport) there was not the expected English-speaking Miss Velibelova of Kratky Films to meet us. The chairman of British Documentary had provided us with a sketch map, a warning that the lifts in Prague only worked if you had one of a number of possible coins of varying sizes, and a heartfelt report on the steepness of the seven-floor ascent to Kratky Films. We decided to face all the risks, and set out.

In any event, what with one thing and another, we spent the whole of that afternoon and evening in Prague on our own, exploring. We must record a few simple facts. We were not shadowed. There were many bookshops (more in a small space than in any city we know except Edinburgh) well-stocked with books of all kinds in many languages. There were several bookstalls selling English newspapers, and the reading-room in the hotel had them all. Beer was fivepence-halfpenny a pint (that's how we got the right coin to work the Kratky film lift).

But most of all we saw that people looked cheerful, much more cheerful than crowds in Oxford Street. We knew that our superficial inspection of Prague could not be of much academic value—but we knew, too, that when people look like that, they are certainly not living under a reign of terror.

At 8.30 in the morning we were taken by Miss Velibelova to the President Wilson Railway Station by a circuitous route, picking up essential documents and curious boxes as we moved from office to office. Outside the Wilson station, where we learned that we had to walk a hundred yards for our (reduced-fare) tickets, we encountered with joy our old friend Perski, who is in charge of Polish newsreels and whose sketches of the delegates to the Congress adorn these pages. We then made our way to the platform where we found a not-so-smart-as-in-themovies Orient Express, with no seats outside first-class. Establishing ourselves in a secondclass corridor, we awaited events and we didn't have to wait long. Down the platform came Joris Ivens, accompanied by the Australian, Katherine Duncan, who we learned was working as his assistant. Hot on their heels came the American Marian Mitchell, also working with Ivens, and at that precise moment, seeking vainly for his luggage, together with the typewriter of the correspondent of l'Humanité, a red-haired lady who claimed that this was the only time—including the battle of Teruel—in which she had let it out of her clutches. Two seconds later arrived, amidst acclamation, another member of the Polish delegation, Bossak, with an important briefcase, which we learned only later, during breakfast at Marianske Lazne, contained butter, Nescafe, marmalade, goat cheese, bacon, and the remaining comestibles without which no self-respecting Pole would, it appears, venture beyond his own border. Pausing officially only at Pilsen, where beer was served from trolleys, the Orient Express deposited the delegates at Marianske Lazne

## Inaugural Meeting

Within less than an hour of our arrival the inaugural meeting of the Congress took place in a room at the appropriately named Hotel Yalta. The provisional secretary, Jean Painleve, was there from France, together with Henri Langlois. Georges Toeplitz, the leading Polish delegate, had come on from Prague the night before with Elmar Klos, the director of Kratky Film, which co-ordinates all short film production in Czechoslovakia. There were two delegates from Hungary, Mr Kertesz and Miss Zsigmondy, Theodor Balk from Yugoslavia, who was at the 1947 Brussels meeting, Bech from Switzerland, Vernaillen from Belgium (standing in for Henri Storck who could not come), and two other Czech representatives, Kadar and Sulc, Slightly later arrived two Brazilians, Amado and Scliar. We all sat down and the official reception began. We were addressed by the Czechoslovak Minister of Information, the Director of his Films Division, and by Dr Brousil, already well known and well liked by all those concerned with earlier Film Festivals in Prague and London. From these speeches, which were all of them both practical and inspiring, one very important phrase emerged, 'Documentary is the conscience of the cinema'.

With this in mind the delegates gave their own consciences no chance and prepared to set to work. First, however, there was one very important function. As our host, Elmar Klos, offered us ceremonial bread and salt. One delegate refused on the grounds that he was not hungry. Later the interpreting system became smoother, and such dictionary deadlocks were rare. The defaulting delegate made good his mistake at the tail end of the round.

Congress, within an hour of meeting, then got down to business. Delegates presented their credentials, and it was at once clear that Great

Britain was so far the only country which had formed an organization specially to represent it in the World Union. This fact, together with a brief report on the work of British Documentary, given by the British delegation, later that same afternoon, created a very strong impression amongst the other delegates. A president for the Congress and three vice-presidents then had to be elected. The British delegation proposed Elmar Klos as president; and Toeplitz. Ivens and Wright were elected vice-presidents. The acceptance of the delegates' credentials was, as became clear a few minutes later, deeply allied with the approval of the Brussels Declaration of 1947, and, therefore, with the terms of reference of the Draft Constitution, drawn up at Cannes, to the discussion of which the Congress proceeded without any further

The Brussels declaration and the definition of documentary at the beginning of the statutes were both accepted practically without discussion. Following this remarkable unanimity on first principles, the Congress was faced with the slightly muddling problem of sorting out its agenda. It was agreed that the size of the Congress did not make it necessary to appoint a vast number of commissions, and, for the time being, only one commission was appointed. whose job it was to present a practical report on the Draft Constitution before the next meeting of the Congress at 10 a.m. the following morning. It was also proposed, and courageously agreed by the British Delegation, that the language of the Conference should be French. The British delegation accepted this situation with remarkable goodwill in view of the fact that they then became obligated to translate the transactions currently from French into English for the benefit of the Hungarian delegation; this tour de force would never have been achieved had it not been for the assistance of Miss Velibelova of the Czechoslovak delegation, who, like her colleague, was apparently able to speak and interpret every known European language. What was more remarkable was that the French of the British delegation did not, repeat not, have to be translated for the benefit of the members of the French delegation.

### Second Day

The bulk of the second day was devoted to reports by the delegates of various countries regarding the position and activities of the documentary movement. In this way detailed



Klas

information was laid on the table by all the delegates present. Finally, the Constitution of the World Union was fully discussed and accepted in principle, A committee to put it into more legal language was set up, consisting of Toeplitz (Poland), Vernaillen (Belgium), and Langlois (France).

Monday was a heavy day, The British delegation had been sampling the night life of Marianske (a town which consists almost exclusively of restaurants and night clubs) and Wright was moved unwillingly into the chair. National Sections were discussed and the importance of the provision in the Constitution that representatives in the World Union should be by properly organized National Sections, was stressed. A discussion on the right of the film-maker not to have his films tampered with was interrupted by the arrival of a delegation of Russians, including Romm, Piriev and the actor, Cherkasov. Romm promised to give a report on behalf of the Soviet Union the following day. A committee to draw up the constitution of the National and International Courts of Honour was elected, consisting of Ivens (Holland), Bossak (Poland) and Alexander (Britain). The Polish delegation suggested that the work of the Congress could be speeded up if there were also committees on Production and Distribution, to prepare matter for discussion in full meeting. Two committees were elected: Production, Kertesz (Hungary), Bech (Switzerland) and Scliar (Brazil); Production, Klos (Czechoslovakia), Painleve (France) and Toeplitz (Poland). The full meeting dissolved at midday, much to the relief of the chairman, and the committees worked in the afternoon, interrupted only by a newsreel session, during which the delegates were filmed entering the Casino, which, lest there be any misunderstanding, was the principal theatre of the Film Festival proper.

On the fourth day Congress with very little difficulty decided on the basic categories of Documentary, as follows:

Documentary films fall into one of four categories, according to their purpose:

- 1. Social.
- 2. Scientific.
- 3. Cultural and Educational.
- 4. Experimental.

According to their audience they fall into three categories:

- 1. General Public.
- 2. Specialist.
- 3. Scholastic.

Romm of the Soviet Union then gave a long, detailed and interesting report on the structure of the documentary system in his country, and

## THE BRUSSELS DECLARATION

(Adopted at a meeting of documentary film makers held in Brussels, June 1947.)

True to their tradition of service to the peoples of the world, in the fields of economic, social and educational progress, documentary film workers continue to take an active viewpoint towards the many problems confronting the world today.

The indispensable role of documentary in the fields of information and education and in the communication of ideas, makes it necessary for the documentary workers, not only to state the problems exactly, but also to guide the public towards the solution of these problems.

In this task, it is the responsibility of every documentary worker to master the technique and artistic potentialities of the documentary film, so that art and technique are fused with the social purpose of documentary.

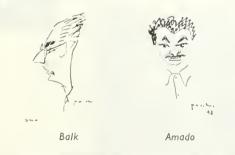
The documentary film has established itself as a form of film art. It has a profound influence on feature films in all countries. This influence will certainly continue. In particular, documentary film workers should engage in all activities designed to secure the full and unfettered expression of social, economic and cultural life through the medium of film.

The principal tasks confronting documentary workers are as follows:

the fight against the enemies of peace and democracy; national, racial and economic oppression and religious intolerance; poverty and disease, illiteracy, ignorance and other social evils;

and the fight for peace and reconstruction; independence of subject peoples; free intellectual and cultural expression; dissemination of knowledge, not at present available to all.

Documentary film workers will collaborate with all international organizations working for the principles enumerated above.



By 'Documentary' is meant the business of recording on celluloid any aspects of reality, interpreted either by factual shooting or by sincere and justifiable reconstruction, so as to appeal either to reason or emotion, for the purposes of stimulating the desire for and the widening of human knowledge and understanding, and of truthfully posing problems and their solutions in the sphere of economics, culture and human relations.



Toeplitz

also expressed full support of the Brussels Declaration. After this Congress dealt with the reports of the committees on Production and Distribution. As regards Production, an important resolution was passed:

'Newsreels are not necessarily documentaries, but as actuality films fall into the category of informational films. The World Union has decided that it is the duty of documentary film workers to encourage newsreels to be better planned and more progressive; further, the World Union denounces the danger inherent in the extension to documentary films of the superficiality common to most newsreels.'

In addition, decisions were arrived at regarding joint production by documentary groups in various nations, with special references to the exchange of technicians and the exchange of material and information. The Distribution Committee made eleven important recommendations on non-theatrical distribution.

Late in the day, but with unabated energy, the Congress conducted a final discussion on the Constitution and followed this a prolonged, technical and vigorous discussion on the terms of reference of the Court of Honour. That same evening the French texts were agreed and the English texts were prepared.

On the fifth day Mrs Mustacza spoke for Rumania and George Stoney, very effectively, for the USA. The rest of the day was spent in elections and tidying up. All the officers were appointed:

Executive:

President, Basil Wright (Great Britain); vicepresidents, Joris Ivens (Holland). Elmar Klos (Czechoslovakia); secretary, Georges Toeplitz (or nominee) (Poland); treasurer, Ruis Santos (or nominee) (Brazil).

Court of Honour:

Presiding, Jean Painleve (France), Henri Storck (Belgium), Bela Balasz (Hungary).

It was unanimously agreed that the next Congress should be held at Edinburgh, Subscriptions were agreed upon, with due reference to the problems of international exchange. The French and English texts of the Constitution and the rules of the Court of Honour were signed by all the delegates, and after a Press conference, at which the new secretary distinguished himself by making the same speech in three different languages consecutively, Congress formally came to an end.

It should be added that in addition to its general labours the Congress attended projections of documentaries from nearly all the countries represented, every evening from 10.30 p.m. until all hours.



Feeling of Hostility (National Film Board of Canada)

# The Battle of the Heavy Water (Norway)



# Edin ILLUS



Ditte Child of Man (Denmark)

# burgh TRATED



The Home Town Paper (National Film Board of Canada)



Those Blasted Kids (Denmark)

Sleeping Villages (Argentine)



Two Ballet Films \*

# Pas de Deux

by

# PETER BAYLIS and JACK HOWELLS

WHEN it comes to dancing we knew a thing or—as there are two of us—two. We knew that pas de bourrée wasn't a postal district; and we knew that pas du tout didn't mean 'Everybody on stage for the last number!' But apart from that, we had pretty open minds about dancing. In fact, they were so open that somebody must have noticed it. That was why we found ourselves watching two films on the subject. The first was called Steps of the Dance (Crown Film Unit).

It wouldn't have been right for some of you to be there. It was made, we fancy, for people like us. It set out to explain what a ballet was in easy steps. It was a good film, too (you don't find many reviewers committing themselves like that). It was conscientiously made, it was sincere and enjoyable. But it didn't tell us a lot more about ballet than we'd guessed.

Mr Robert Helpmann (who appears) told us that the terms used in ballet were French and he explained by visual illustration what they meant. He pointed out that arms, knees and posture of the head were important factors and we saw young men and women rehearsing. We learnt that dancing is hard work, that conceiving a ballet is hard work, that composer and choreographer, scenic artist, dancers and stage-hands all cooperated to produce the final thing that was a ballet. Oh, and that a ballet told a story.

The film was to end with a short, complete

ballet and the story was told to us first in a brilliantly thought-out little sequence, the commentator outlining the plot while the camera moved over the waiting props and the dancers silently preparing. Somehow the result was delicately moving: the artists off-stage, the frank pieces of cardboard, and the bare bones of the story they were to breathe to life added up to something near poignancy.

Then came the climax—the performance of the ballet. It was presented flat and theatrically. That is to say, it all took place in long shot with a static camera; lighting was strictly unemotional. The reason was obvious and well-meant. The camera was recording; it was an instructional film and in an instructional film we know that where clarity conflicts with film technique the latter must be sacrificed. And the whole point was that we should see the finished thing as it would appear on the stage. But, of course, we didn't. We only saw a film of that and it was another kettle of fish.

Let us face it, for the makers of the film didn't. This set out to be an exposition of the steps of the dance. But very early on, it became impatient, understandably. Everybody was itching to get on with the dance. And why not? Having seen the mechanics, the dance was to show us how these could be made to affect us emotionally. That in itself was meant to be a piece of instruction.

Therefore it would have been better to have used the recording medium unashamedly for that purpose, to create in us, in the cinema, what the dance would have created on the stage. As it was, we missed the whirling close-up, the filmic presentation. It would have been a lie? Of course it would. All art consists in telling little lies in order to convey a greater truth. That's where that little thing called integrity comes in—you have to have it when you're dealing daily in lies.

To sum up: the whole presentation was well thought-out; the camera work in the earlier sequences was excellent; the film was neat, well-contrived and never dull. But if you are one of those people who are not well-disposed to ballet, it is doubtful if the film would increase your enthusiasm. Perhaps that doesn't matter; perhaps it isn't aimed at you. Exactly whom it is aimed at is not very clear, after all.

If you are one of those who find classical dancing too stylized and formal, then the second film should do something for you. This one was called Lord Siva Danced, made in India with additional scenes shot in England. This was quite an experience. We don't pretend we got one quarter of it. Indian dancing like Indian music for Western folk is an acquired taste; it takes a little understanding. But here again was sincerity, enthusiasm, both on the part of film makers and dancers. The amazing thing about Indian dancing, it seems to us, is not only that it has something queer and exciting to say, but that it says it with such economy. Here are no groups of dancers flitting about the stage; it is all done in practically one place. And what we saw was strictly a pas d'un (or d'une—you see both in this film). We do not claim that every movement registered, but the subtlety, the restraint and control left us gaping. (Wake up, Howells!)

There was one dance that left us shaken men. The dancer was an elderly man; he was interpreting a bee entering a flower and flying away. But he did it all with his face and his hands and was photographed with effect lighting (all credit to the film makers). No flying lady as the Dying Bee, no prostrate maidens forming the cup of the petals, no young men draped round as the flowers of the forest. This artist had something intense to say, he said it with amazing economy and the camera helped him to say it. Ram Gopal appears too, in a Dance to the Rising Sun; and one flicker of his shoulders was equal to four arabesques and a pas de deux.

There you are then—two films on dancing. Steps of the Dance technically polished in production and content. Lord Siva Danced, production not as good, yet in content, more than polished. It had virility, something welling up from deep roots, speaking for and to the ordinary people. It even reached us.

## The Films \*

Steps of the Ballet. Made by Crown Film Unit. Producer: Alexander Shaw. Director: Muir Mathieson. Choreography: Andrée Howard, to the music of Arthur Benjamin and the decor and costumes of Hugh Stevenson. Photography: A. E. Jeakins. Editor: Jocelyn Jackson. Art Director: Scott MacGreg or. Music played by the Philhar monic Orche, tra of London. Recorded by Ken Cameron. Explained by Robert Felpmann.

Lord Siva Danced, Made by Shell Film Unit. *Director:* Sarah Erulker, *Photography:* Keki Mistri and Sidney Beadle.



Andrée Howard and Arthur Benjamin discuss the Ballet with two of the Dancers

# Why Should Truth Go Dowdy?

We would remind readers that views expressed in any unsigned article are not necessarily those of the Board—Ed.

I saw a documentary film the other night. Or it may have been a feature—or a feature-documentary.... But don't let's start that yet. Anyway, it was in a proper cinema with usherettes and a Gents so it was probably a feature. It was called *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare (working from a Report, of course). And it had quite a lot of social content for a feature, so it will be in order for any documentary person to go and see it. Film Centre's been so that should be quite all right. In fact, anybody can go—even the public. Don't let that disturb you. There is nothing in it to offend the intellect.

Indeed, there is one potential documentarian in the cast. His name is Polonius, I think. But the name doesn't matter. You'll be sure to spot him. Don't start cheering him, nobody else does; whatever you may think, you can take it from me, he is not the hero. When Hamlet asked him what the players were capable of, he sounded exactly like a Senior Documentarian (vintage '32) explaining to a suspicious sponsor what his boys could do: 'Tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical-pastoral. Seneca cannot be too heavy nor Plautus too light.'

It's the sub-divisions that, like Charlie Chester,\* ring that bell. 'Documentary . . . Feature . . . documentary-feature . . . feature-documentary . . . a-feature-film-with-a-documentary-background . . a-fictional-film-using-real-people-with-some-actiors-dealing-with-a-properly-registered-and-approved-social-problem-achieving-a-creative-interpretation-of-reality-calculated-to-make-peace-exciting (with-some-dialogue).'

You want to watch that kind of thing. Some people can't follow you. If you persist, you'll find yourselves one of these days having to explain to a slightly sceptical teachers' conference the exact difference between a documentary-strip-tease and a feature-film-strip. What's more, I believe some of you could do it, too.

But it's no good, boys. The time has come to talk of many things and it would be as well to give them a name each. And you can sort yourselves out in the process. The cause of all the worried frowns is that word documentary. Throw away the old umbrella, it's got holes in it. And anyway, it's not raining half as hard as you think. It's just the noise on the roof.

Go and do a report on yourselves—and then, preferably, a treatment. Find out exactly what you are. I'll start you off. You're a social problem.... There! Happy? Well, take it up from there; with your training, it should be easy. And when you've finished your Report do you know what you'll find? I'll tell you: that you're good fellows, with the right roots; but you knew that. But you'll also find out (if your report is based on an honest investigation)

whether you are a teacher or a pamphleteer or maybe (just maybe) a creative artist. But whatever you are be proud of it. Teachers, lecturers, playwrights, are all good things to be. If you find, for example, that after all, you're really a technical journalist—well, all right. You've got a job to do—but don't kid yourself you're a dramatist; you may be a damned good teacher—but that doesn't make you an artist. Just decide.

Now teachers and dramatists (good ones) have much in common. They both have an active interest in people and a desire to help. In the great big world outside Soho Square such people get on quite well with one another. There's no confusion. So what's the trouble with you? It's simple. It's that little word film. You've been messing about with bits of it for so long that you've forgotten what it is (if you ever knew).

Film is rolls of celluloid manufactured usually by Kodak and on it you can put anything from pornography to prayer. There's nothing fundamentally new about the mental process involved. There's been a stuff called paper flapping round the universe for a long time now and it's been used for a multitude of purposes. In this respect, as a matter of fact, it's better than film.

So let's take a book and call it The Virgin's Delight with a nice, crude cover sealed in cellophane to stop you reading it without buying it (don't snigger-I'll bet you've been caught that way, too). Where will you find it? Where it belongs-on the kerb, next to the gutter. But Shakespeare, Johnson, Pope, Keats and all the rest of them are in the public library. They may not be read but they're there—respectable. bound in leather, designed to last. And they've been there a long time. They're the acknowledged tops. You can work downwards if you like, but at least you've got something to show you how far you're slipping. In the slow old days when monks made books by hand, only the good was worth the trouble. There was no money in it. Then came the rotary printing press and fortuitously a semi-literate public 'waiting' as Harmsworth put it 'with their pennies in their hands'. And the trouble started.

Now take films. The trouble with films is (a) they're so damned costly, (b) there's so much pompous fiddle-faddle before you can say what's on your mind (which makes it an ideal medium for those who haven't much to say anyway) and (c) they were invented so late in the day. For make no mistake, had they been invented when they should, you'd have found Brother Anselm in his cutting-room, patiently piecing together his record for the vaults of posterity, his habit reeking of acetate and the light from the editola gleaming chastely on his tonsure. As it is, there are no latter-day saints in Wardour Street. They're in Soho Square.

Now take it easy. That's the biggest compli-

ment I'm likely to pay you. Until you came along, the pimps and panders had it all their own way; nicely tied up with jobs for the boys. They were outside society and soaking it hard. Occasionally, they made some good pictures, responsible pictures. If you get a monkey at a typewriter (no cracks, please) one day you'll get the Lord's Prayer . . . you know the principle. It isn't even that the boys object to culture; they'd go in for it tomorrow in a big way if they were convinced it paid. You believe in it whether it pays or not. And there's the rub (I told you I'd been to Hamlet). Yet you, with good on your side, have made some bad pictures, real topof-the-class stinkers. But we'll forgive you. After all, you were the first that ever burst into that sea of hooey. So remember: whether they're features or er . . . 'documentaries' (well, you know what I mean), whether they come in ten reels or two, whether they're made in Wardour Street or Soho Square, whether they've got stories or whether they haven't-the only real difference between you and the boys is motive. (It used to be anyway, but I'm worried about some of you.) Get that motive clear and then decide in which field it's going to motivate you. But don't mix the breeds.

You were the first then, I say, to dare to state that film could be used for other things. And because you were reactionaries, you had to state it raw. You had to wear a halo in self-defence. You were the original monks of the film business. Now for God's sake get out of that habit—and throw away the sandals while you're about it. Get rid of the sack-cloth and ashes.

'Going to get my old tuxedo pressed, Going to sew some buttons on my vest, For tonight I'm going to look my best. . . .' You know the old song? Here's another verse adapted for the occasion:

'Going to get the barber slick my hair, Got to get myself to Leicester Square, For tonight I've got my première...' It makes you think, doesn't it?

For look. Showmanship, slickness, spit-andpolish are not evil things. It's just that they've usually been the prerogative (in cinema particularly) of the people who have dubious things to say. Take it from them. Why should truth, sincerity and human dignity go dowdy? As long as you let it, that bust you see up there on the hoarding will be a slightly different contour from the one in the public library. You're bookish boys, but in the halls of literature the battle is won, indeed, was never really waged. The Virgin's Delight is in the gutter as I've told you. But its celluloid equivalent is up there in lights (and celluloid's your business). Don't write letters to each other about it, Get started but you'll have to change your ways.

For, speaking of lights, remember Chester-

\*A well-known tow-brow comedian of the day.

(Continued at foot of page 94)



# The Red Shoes

THIS FILM had a quality of magic about it, which is common to most stories about the stage, perhaps because the theatre is concerned with the creation of another world, which can be either a faithful imitation of our own world, or a fantastic figment of an author's imagination, but which in any case is larger than life, more tragic, more humorous, more squalid or more beautiful. In this world it is possible to pick out the significant details and ignore the mass of insignificant ones which obscure them in everyday life, and the actors, while they walk the stage, are demi-gods, superhuman or sub-human, Prospero or Caliban, made of no common clay. There is a peculiar fascination in any story which shows you the backstage scene, the squabbles, rivalry, chaos, comradeship, hard work and creative genius which go to make up a finished production. This film has the further advantage of a subject, ballet, which is in itself beautiful to look at, and The Red Shoes is visually superb. Again and again in their ability to pick out the detail which sums up an emotion, such as a pair of red dancing slippers going at fantastic speed down a circular iron staircase, or the painted tragic face of Massine looking down at those same slippers after their owner has been killed, Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger show their supreme ability to think in terms of the camera. The film also shows traces of a certain grandioseness which has a tendency to mar the otherwise finely imaginative work of these directors. The scene in the society drawing room, where Anton Walbrook finds his future ballerina assoluta, is singularly unconvincing, and one scene where Moira Shearer ascends what seems miles and miles of improbable steps in evening dress of a pretentiousness which seems out of place even in Monte Carlo, is cinematically bad and quite unnecessary to the action. The plot is likewise weak, being concerned with the conflict in a dancer's mind between the claims of her art and her desire for domestic bliss, which results in what seemed a somewhat unnecessary leap in front of a train. Anton Walbrook gives a beautiful performance, as the impressario who demands a single-minded devotion from his dancers, but the psychological climax of the film is unsatisfying and unconvincing, partly because the two minds behind the conflict, Lermontov's and the ballerina's, are insufficiently developed in the film and partly because Moira Shearer. who dances exquisitely but is no great actress, fails to compel in the audience that willing suspension of disbelief which alone could have redeemed the weak scripting of this part of the film.

This may sound somewhat damning, but in actual fact it matters very little. The private lives of the characters which compose the ostensible plot of the film are not really important. The film is really about ballet, those who dance in it, those who make the music for it, those who design the sets and costumes, the man who controls and co-ordinates these activities, about the ballet. Whether it shows us the finished performance the chaos which precedes it, the mad rush of the galleryites at Covent Garden pouring upstairs, or the ungainly, agile, Frenchly expressive high kick of one Paris porter demonstrating to another

what this thing ballet is, Ballet is the subject, the plot and the hero, and as long as this was the case, there was never a dull moment. This is not to say, either, that this film is primarily intended for balletomanes, although it might possibly prepare the ground for balletomania in hitherto uninfected minds. It tells you incidentally a great deal about ballet, but in such a way that you do not realize that you are being instructed. Here there are several interesting comparisons to be drawn between this film intended for entertainment, and a recent Central Office of Information film, reviewed elsewhere in this issue, called Steps of the Ballet, which is meant to inform. Much of the basic material of ballet was explained, and finally a complete ballet was shown. It was photographed flat, that is to say, the camera took up the position of the audience and stayed there throughout. This is no way to bring ballet to the screen, for it is by its nature a live and fluid thing, just as film should be live and fluid. It is a great mistake to think, however, that because the subject is live it will keep that life automatically when it is transferred to celluloid. In The Red Shoes there is what must be the best part of twenty minutes of pure ballet, without a word of dialogue and without leaving the stage, and the interest never flagged. There was hardly any flat photography; some of the time you saw the actual ballet being danced, and here the camera was everywhere on the stage, forestalling the dancers' movements, leaping into the red shocs as Moira Shearer put them on, and closing up to them again as they are drawn off her feet at the end. Much of the time the camera was interpreting the dance in terms of the conflict in the dancer's mind between her love and her dancing, and sometimes it juxtaposed an image to heighten the movement of the dancers and the music, as when the sea surged in the auditorium as Moira Shearer spun across the stage in a wide spacious arc, and the music swelled to meet her. The dancing was magnificent, Moira Shearer, Robert Helpmann, who was responsible for the choreography of the Red Shoes ballet, and above all Leonide Massine, all playing their parts superbly. Massine, apart from his part in the dancing, stole the picture as far as I was concerned. Every time he appeared on the screen, everyone else appeared half alive beside his intense vitality. Every movement of his fingers or his feet talked more expressively than a couple of pages of dialogue, and he was largely responsible for the feeling of authenticity in this picture of the life behind the scenes. The picture may be heightened, as any dramatic representation, whether play or film, must be, but it is a vivid and convincing one.

The subject of *The Red Shoes* is ballet, and to put over this subject it has a plot. As in the case of many documentary films, where they allow their audiences the sop of a fictional plot, this is weak. Nevertheless, although there are many minor flaws in the film, it makes its audience not only swallow a great deal of ballet but thoroughly enjoy doing it, and it succeeds in doing this because it approaches its subject through living things, through the people whose lives are in-

volved. The tendency for documentary films is to approach their subjects through dead things, through figures and statistics and factory chimnevs. The very names applied to this type of filmmaking are indicative; documentary, factual. Documents and facts are dry things unless they are brought to life by showing the human beings whose lives are bound up in them. Two things are needed in documentary films, more humanity and more visual excitement. It is a very much easier thing to make a film about ballet and the people who dance it human and visually exciting, than to bring the same qualities into a film about factory workers, but it has been successfully done in documentary. Steps of the Ballet is a film intended for novices, made in the hope of interesting people in ballet by explaining the basic technique; well and good. I would not mind betting, however, that more people will come away from The Red Shoes with the idea that perhaps it would be worth finding out more about ballet than will be enthused by the more informative Steps of the Ballet.

# WHY SHOULD TRUTH GO DOWDY?

(Continued from page 93)

ton's illiterate peasant looking at the sky signs on Broadway? He would surely, said Chesterton, believe that those wonderful lights, speaking 'through the agency of the two most vivid and most mystical of the gifts of God, colour and fire' were conveying some such glorious message as 'Give me liberty or Give me Death'; he would be distressed to find that all that golden fire merely stood for 'Mr Bilge's Paradise Toothpaste'. But because I know that Bilge is only Bilge, shall I stoop to the profanity of saying that fire is only fire?' For 'fire' read 'showmanship', 'sparkle', and the profanity's yours. So get off your knees.

'The truth drones on,' said someone recently, with the muffled voice of one truly speaking from a well.' If you have some truth to tellclimb out. Tell it neat like a teacher, if you will; but if you want to write it large then do it in the theatres. Don't think it's easy because in the hurly-burly of show business you have to be damned sure of yourself and your message. You've got to be dead certain inside if you decide to muck about. Which are you? If you're the pamphleteer and the teacher then go ahead where you belong and good luck to you; the world has need of thee. But don't clutter up the stage. You don't belong there. Stand back and let the showmen among you come forward.

Oh, and if you do decide at last that you're a showman after all, don't ponder too long as to whether you're about to sell your soul. It may well be a highly academic self-question. You see, you have to find a buyer.

'The time is out of joint; O cursèd spite That ever I was born to set it right . . . .' Away with cussèd spite, you Highlander Hamlets, you—and set it right with a wisecrack!

# The Film Society Movement in South Africa

Ьy

# Lily Rabkin

(Reprinted from 'The Outspan', February 6, 1948)

THE first South African Film Society was started in Cape Town some years ago, but it had to give up owing to numerous difficulties. The present flourishing movements—there are film societies in Cape Town, Stellenbosch, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg, Durban and Maritzburg, and at the University of the Witwatersrand—also began in Cape Town. In June, 1945, about ten people, all interested in the film, met at a private house, and decided to form some organization for the showing of films, old and new, which were worthy of attention and which could not be seen on the commercial circuit.

The initial aims were very modest. We did not expect that the group would attract more than 40 people and we decided to start our meetings with documentary films easily obtainable locally. Each of the original sponsors contibuted something towards initial expenses and a circular explaining the idea was sent out to people who might be interested in the project. We hired a board-room in Adderley Street, which holds about 90 people, and held our first meeting on August 29, 1945. To our pleased surprise—and embarrassment, for some had to be turned away—about 150 people turned up and the idea was *triumphantly* justified.

The first programme consisted of a British Council colour film, *Teeth of Steel;* a 1917 Charlie Chaplin short; that classic British documentary, *Night Mail* (directors, Harry Watt and Basil Wright); and the first of Frank Capra's powerful war documentaries, *Why We Eight*.

Thus the Cape Town Film Society was born. Its objects, as laid down in the constitution, are (1) to further interest in the film as a social, artistic and historical medium, (2) to further film appreciation. The CTFS is, of eourse, a non-commercial and non-profit-making body, and it is worthy of note that it has no colour bar. The society meets monthly and meetings are open only to members, who pay their subscriptions for a minimum period of three months. The subscription is only 2s. 6d. a month, which places the society within the reach of most people.

One of the first problems of a film society in South Africa is a suitable hall. We met for a long time at the Metropolitan Hall, which seats about 300 people. When the hall was reserved by the Methodist Church for its own activities, we moved to the smaller Oddfellows Hall. We have, therefore, had to keep our membership more or less stationary at about 200 people.

The membership is composed about equally of men and women and consists of representatives of all professions and occupations. Most of the members are between 25 and 45 years. We have regular monthly meetings, have shown a wide variety of films, old and new,

and have, we hope, brought home the importance of the film both as a sociological and artistic instrument. Geoffrey Smith, our chairman, was present at Brussels in June last year when, during the Film Festival there, the World Union of Documentary was formed, pledging its support to the fight for peace and reconstruction, for the independence of subject peoples, for free intellectual and cultural expression and the free dissemination of knowledge.

Either directly or indirectly inspired by the Cape Town example, six other film societies have been started. Once they were in operation, Cape Town has been able to help and advise in many ways, particularly by lending its films.

The first of these was Stellenbosch. The membership of the Stellenbosch Film Society now stands at about 80, of whom about 60 are drawn from the University staff and their families, graduates and students. Of the remainder, nine are schoolteachers. Stellenbosch, an extremely enthusiastic and enterprising group, holds meetings once a month for eight months of the year.

Port Elizabeth, in turn, held its first, very crowded, film society meeting in the Technical College Hall on January 24, 1946. The sponsor was a local industrialist, Neil Abrahams. The membership of the Port Elizabeth Film Society is about 130, mostly professional and business people over thirty.

The Johannesburg Film Society began operations in October, 1946. The chairman, Fanny Klenerman, a Johannesburg bookseller, hired the Escom Theatre and invited those interested to see *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, the famous German experimental film (imported into South Africa by the Cape Town Film Society). Then a meeting was called and the Johannesburg Film Society was formed. It is naturally the biggest group, with about 450 members. Meetings are held in the Escom Theatre, with two 'sittings' for each programme

Durban started its Film Society in February, 1947. Dr Herbert Coblans, the chairman, had been on the first committee of the Cape Town Film Society, and gathered together a preliminary committee. At the first meeting, Film and Reality, an absorbingly exciting history of the film, with excerpts from film landmarks of many kinds, was shown. As in the other centres, the hall was too small for the enthusiasts. Now, with the use of the larger YMCA hall, the membership is between 350 and 400.

In Maritzburg the meetings are held in the hall of the Technical College, which allows the use of the hall and projector at greatly reduced terms, because the Principal, very rightly, feels that such a body is a valuable form of adult education. Of the membership of about 140 a third are students (who pay a

reduced subscription) and 20 are members of the University staff.

The youngest group is the Witwatersrand Film Society, which has already held a couple of meetings.

First in the list of film society problems in South Africa is the quest for films. Cape Town started off with documentaries, which are easily available in South Africa, Of these the most spectacular, perhaps, was Nanook of the North (Robert Flaherty, 1922), a copy of which was found in a commercial film library in Johannesburg. This film was shown by the film societies long before the re-issue was shown on a South African commercial circuit. When it came on to the commercial screen, members of the Cape Town Film Society, to my knowledge, and probably elsewhere, went to see it again, urged their friends 'not to miss it', and sent their children to the matinées. It is thus plain that the film society movement is a useful supplement to the commercial cinema.

Other films are not so easy to come by, Luckily the British Film Institute has a National Film Library, which lets film societies have on permanent loan prints of films over which it has certain copyright rights. In this way the Cape Town Film Society has been able to import, at very reasonable cost, a number of films which are very important cinematic landmarks, and to share them with the other film societies. These include, among others, the Russian Mother (Pudovkin, 1926), the German Cabinet of Dr Caligari (Robert Wiene, 1919). the French Italian Straw Hat (Rene Clair's iovous satire on the French bourgeoisie, made in 1927), the Russian The General Line (Eisenstein and Alexandrov, 1929), and the documentary history of the film, Film and Reality (Cavalcanti, 1942).

It is very interesting to note to which films members respond most heartily—sometimes the response is very unexpected. Cape Town members have enjoyed most, I think, Nanook of the North, The Italian Straw IIat, and the two parts of Film and Reality. Stellenbosch's high-light was also Nanook. Port Elizabeth liked Diary for Timothy best, and Durban went for The Ox-bow Incident, The Italian Straw Hat and Sabotage (Cape Town wasn't over-excited about Sabotage, but we had a poor print). Maritzburg enjoyed Film and Reality, The Italian Straw IIat and Nanook.

A further aim of the film societies is to cooperate if possible with other cultural and educational organizations. Cape I own has had a few highly successful experiments in this direction. In March, 1946, we had a meeting, in eo-operation with the Association of Scientific Workers, on 'The Film and Public Health'. Relevant films were shown and Dr F. R. Luke

(Continued on page 96, column 3)

# CORRESPONDENCE

### Commentaries

sir: Emboldened by the sensible remarks of John Maddison in your recent issue, I venture to write as one who has made scores of commentaries and does not greatly care if, under prevailing conditions, he never makes another.

When I say 'made', I mean, read out, from sheets of paper which he has not seen before, at a swiftly moving series of screen pictures which he may have seen run through once.

And when I say 'read out', I mean, often bellowed into a microphone hung above head level a couple of yards off.

What sort of result can be expected but a cross between Fitz-who's-it's infantile travelogues and the American cadences of the imitators of E. V. H. Emmett?

As for the matter typed on the sheets . . . cameras work inside the heads of cinema audiences, behind their eyes. Can't sound tracks work there too, behind their ears, as responsible broadcasters make the microphone work? If your documentary directors want the impersonal, take-it-or-leave-it declamation of the BBC news bulletins, then let us all go on as we're doing; but don't expect audiences to be interested.

Interest comes by attraction; and a mere stream of declaimed sound reduces an audience, like people watching continually moving water, to idiocy not interest. That many commentarics resemble mill-races is due to the fact that they are written by people who don't use their voices.

Maybe the less commentary, the better. But let the commentator at least *speak* to his audience, with all the skill and craft he has. He will make the best job of it, if he is in the making of the film as early as possible, and at least at the cutting-room stage; and is personally responsible for what he says.

Yours faithfully,

JOSEPH MACLEOD

### **UNRRA**

sir: In connection with Grant McLean's interesting article on filming for UNRRA in China and his proposal that the UN might well sponsor such units throughout the world, I should like to call your attention to five other units sponsored

by UNRRA: Captain David Miller, US Signal Corps, who travelled all through Europe to produce Seeds of Destiny (1946 US Academy Documentary Award winner); Nicholas B. Read, National Film Board of Canada, who went to Greece to produce Out of the Ruins; Arthur Calder-Marshall, who went to Egypt to produce The Star and the Sand, the film about the UNRRA Yugoslav refugee camp; Peter Hopkinson, who went to Byelorussia and the Ukraine to shoot the film later released by the March of Time as The Russians Nobody Knows, and Victor Vicas, who went to Italy to produce Italy Rebuilds for the International Film Foundation.

The United Nations itself now has films in production in nine different countries: United States, Mexico, France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Poland, Belgium, Czechoslovakia and Sweden. If 58 economy-minded United Nations are willing to grant the funds, we hope to continue and develop this new and important field of international documentary film production for international understanding.

Sincerely yours,

WILLIAM H. WELLS
Chief, Film and Television Section
Division of Films and Visual Information

### **Cumberland Story**

SIR: I wished to show the uncut version of Cumberland Story which as you know ran for about 45 minutes. I now learn it has been cut to 10 minutes. Now if this is true then it is time there was an outcry. What does Humphrey Jennings, its director, think of this emasculation? I have heard the miners objected to the accident sequence (which I believe is cut) but there are other cuts. This film, in my opinion, was a firstclass job-even Winnington of the News Chronicle described it as the 'Documentary of the Year'. If the reason for this ruthless cutting is considered necessary because of its propaganda effect, surely a Film Society does not come within the category of squeamish audiences. The accident sequences are not cut in Kameradschaft or The Stars Look Down, Film Societies approach films with a different attitude of mind and I should be interested to know

FILM SOCIETIES (continued from p. 95)

gave an address. At another meeting, to which architectural students were invited, films on architecture and town-planning were shown, and Mr O. Pryce-Lewis, of the University of Cape Town, spoke on the subject. In May of last year, in conjunction with the Institute of Citizenship, we had a programme on 'Juvenile Delinquency', with the outstanding British documentary, Children on Trial (Jack Lee). and an address by Mr W. D. Marais, Principal of the Tokai reformatories.

Stellenbosch invites committees of University societies or groups, such as Native Administration, Sociology and Psychology, to films in which they would be interested, and sponsored with the Geography Department of the University the showing of films of a whaling expedition to the Antarctic. Stellenbosch maintains a happy relationship with the local cinema.

Durban has co-operated with the local Medical Association by inviting its members to see a film on 'Neuro-Psychiatry'.

It must not be thought, however, that the film societies meet in a mood of gloomy uplift. Members learn much, it is true, about the film and other matters—and they enjoy themselves greatly in the process. In Cape Town, 'Film Society Friday' is an institution among its members, which they do not care to miss.

The road is not an easy one. Halls and suitable projectors are not always easy to obtain. South Africa is very far from the centre of things and importing films is impossible, because of copyright restrictions and the very heavy customs duty, except when films with an educational certificate can be imported through the facilities so helpfully offered by the British Film Institute, which can, however, only provide those over which it has certain rights. But the South African Film Societies hope to continue what is a useful service in the cause of education and enjoyment. It is a movement which should have the active support of all educational and cultural bodies, and of the cinema industry, which cannot but benefit from an eager, well-informed audience.

the views of directors whose films have been carved up, and also Film Societies.

Yours faithfully,

H. E. NORRIS Hon Secretary

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VOL. 7 NO. 69 SEPT-OCT 1948

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# QUOTA

THE LAST few rugged miles to the promised land are traditionally the hardest on the feet and documentary film-makers do not always appreciate how close they may be to the end of a long journey. For adequate theatrical distribution is nearer than at any time since John Grierson brought his herrings home nearly twenty years ago.

The cynic will here break in with hard and pessimistic words. He will argue with some justice that it remains as Herculean a labour as ever it was to persuade the exhibitor of the virtues of the film of fact; that the national home of the Philistines is still in Wardour Street; that there are plenty of good supporting films still unbooked. The incontrovertible fact remains that the exhibitor, however unregenerate, is now required by law to find 25 per cent of his supporting programme in the British market. The law that says so has been in force since October 1. Moreover, the reliefs from its full impact that are to be granted to a very high proportion of exhibitors because of their special competitive circumstances, will apply only in the case of the first feature film, and will provide no escape from the obligation to fulfil the full quota in second features and shorts.

There is, of course, a snag. Those who will not be comforted are right when they point out that the conditions for the marketing of short films and second features could scarcely be worse than they are at present. A quota may have been fixed but there remains no guarantee of revenue commensurate with the cost of first-class supporting films. Distributors and exhibitors are only too ready to admit that their financial arrangements do not at present provide for the paying of adequate rentals for anything but the feature film. The burden of their argument is that the feature producers demand the last penny that can be wrung from the public, leaving nothing for the makers of supporting films.

The problem is not new. It has always been clear that hand in hand with the fixing of an adequate quota there must come some reform in the processes for marketing supporting films. The need for new methods has been recognized in many influential quarters and, in particular, within the Board of Trade. Mr Harold Wilson has promised to set up a Committee to investigate and report upon film-marketing and it can confidently be expected that the case of the supporting-programme makers will receive sympathetic attention. But how soon?

It is of the most vital importance that the Board of Trade should realize the urgency of this inquiry into marketing and distribution, and should be aware that in the interim its quota legislation could become undermined. Some solution to the immediate problem may perhaps be found in an increase in the supply from Governmental, commercial or other national organizations of sponsored films suitable for theatrical showing. (Presumably we are now past the point where it will be argued that sponsorship automatically excludes entertainment.) The new Quota Act does indeed provide an opportunity for sponsors who wish to see the cultural and entertainment level of the supporting programme raised, since the chances of theatrical distribution for their films are considerably greater than they have ever been before. The fact remains that the number of sponsors who will take a sufficiently enlightened view of their responsibilities to the community is always likely to be limited. There is no escaping a final conclusion that it is the President of the Board of Trade who, having brought us thus far, must conduct the makers of supporting films those last few painful miles to their proper place in the public service.

# International Scientific Film Congress London 1948

# IOHN MADDISON

THE Scientific Film Association of Great Britain was born in 1943, out of the enthusiasms of the scientific film society movement and the pioneer efforts of a group within the scientists' trade union, the AScW. The whole edifice of its achievement since then, in organizing and disseminating information about films and in stimulating a nation-wide interest in the screen as a weapon of science, has been built on the voluntary labours of its members. In 1947, side by side with its French colleagues of the Institut de Cinematographie Scientifique, it carried this achievement further by jointly calling together a Congress in Paris which established the International Scientific Film Association. Delegates from every corner of the earth were unanimous in wishing to honour Britain by holding the Association's 1948 Congress in London. In accepting this invitation, the SFA delegates were conscious that to organize such an event would impose a heavy load upon a body whose only finances were its members' subscriptions. The British Government recognized the value a series of international meetings of this kind would have both for science and cinematography in this country. Through the British Film Institute, it made available to the Scientific Film Association, a grant of money substantial enough to guarantee the decent and efficient management of the occasion.

Nine crowded days of activity at the beginning of October with discussions, film shows, exhibitions and international rencontres, were the outcome of some months of anxious preparation. In these lines, I can only offer DFN readers a stop-press canter through what has been up to now the most important series ever held of international manifestations for

cinema in the service of science.

The Congress began with an event of historic significance in another medium-television. After the opening reception, at which Mr Patrick Gordon Walker had underlined the Government's close interest in the scientific film, the delegates were taken to Alexandra Palace, to see a televised preview of some of the films to be shown later in the week. To my mind, the scene before the television cameras symbolized the routes along which we are hoping to advance. John Grierson, to whom we owe so vast an enlargement of the social dimension of cinema, introduced Jean Painlevé, the poet of science on the screen, and Otto Storch, who in his laboratory in Vienna has demonstrated that film is an indispensable instrument of fundamental research. But the outstanding event of the evening came at the end. A hundred thousand or so viewers were able to see Painlevé linking the television camera directly to the microscope and so, for the first time ever, allowing them to gaze with him, through the screens of their sets, on the spectacle of change and movement as it was actually taking place beneath the microscope lens. Painlevé has made one of his most characteristic films about Daphnia, the water flea; here we were exploring its tiny anatomy, not through film, but with all the freshness and immediacy of television. Exciting perspectives are opened up by all this—a whole nation may one day together look down into a world beyond the range of normal human vision.

In the four days of sometimes dry discus-

sion which followed, constructive endeavour was the keynote; in Ritchie Calder's happy phrase, the Iron Curtain gave place to the Silver Screen. A main issue was the more effective international distribution of films; it was realized that a first step towards this must be a better organized system for the exchange of information about films. To this end, the members of a sub-commission, and notably Painlevé, Loose of Holland and Stanford of Britain, worked hard to complete the labours of preceding months and even years in establishing a standard card for recording essential data about individual films. The draft of such a card was approved by the Assembly and will be circulated to all countries. From such beginnings, it is hoped that a reliable international catalogue of scientific films will eventually be evolved. In the meantime, a sub-commission of ISFA will continue to work on cataloguing and appraisal and a further sub-commission will consider, on a brief largely prepared by one of the Australian delegates, other problems of the exchange of films between nations. Besides encouraging the wider distribution of films, the International Association is also pledged to stimulating the production of new scientific films. Science and Cinematography should transcend frontiers, but it was clear from the discussion that internationally there is still much duplication of effort in the production of films, and mutual ignorance of production plans. Apart from the exchange of information about such matters, it was felt that efforts should be made to set on foot international projects—each of which might be coordinated by a single country. For example, Poland was interested in a project on bird migration, Canada might be asked to undertake the co-ordination of a similar one of animal parasites on plants and Britain might envisage working on oceanography and meteorology. The Assembly set up a commission with representatives from Britain, France. Denmark, Poland, Canada and Mexico, to consider how these ideas might be implemented; Arthur Elton, the British member, was entrusted with the task of drawing up a preliminary document to give these general ideas on production a

practical shape.

A three-day festival of scientific films at the Royal Empire Society gave delegates and some two thousand members of the public the opportunity of seeing some fifty films from close on a score of countries. From Britain, there were among others the solid expositional virtues of Precise Measurements for Engineers (Data-COI for DSIR), a superb high-speed record of Fuel Atomization (SIMPL for Shell Film Unit) and GB's splendid Atomic Physics. From France, with a host of other good things, came a series of remarkable biological research films, wittily commented on by the maker, Dragesco. Poland contributed a beautifully photographed and altogether enchanting film on the incubation of young birds. One of Canada's films was the acutely observed psychological piece Feeling of Hostility. The New Zealand Government Film Unit took us on a research expedition to a remote volcanic island, and Australia's study of the diet of a primitive Pacific community brought an exotic flavour to one show. At another show, spontaneous applause interrupted the screening of World of Crystals, one of two colour films from the Soviet Union. And these are only a handful of purely personal impressions out of an embarrassment of riches from the countries named and a dozen others.

Of particular value were the occasions during the congress when specialists met to discuss common problems. At three medical sessions, films were shown, special techniques of research by the cine-camera demonstrated, and ideas exchanged on the best ways of conveying information about medical films. At the educational meetings, speakers from England and Wales, Scotland, Denmark, Egypt, Belgium, Germany and Australia, were mainly concerned with the organization of school film services, and many interesting contrasts of method and approach were brought out. Another specialized session took as its theme the use of films in university teaching and a plan for inter-university co-operation on the international scale was set on foot. The film in industry was the subject of a final specialized meeting. Speakers from the major industries of Britain, from the Belgian FBI and its Ministry of Labour, from the National Film Board of Canada, and from the French industrial film organization, Service-Cinema-Interentreprises. gave some account of their problems and showed films. The working parties, set up at these specialized gatherings, organized by the appropriate Standing Committees of SFA. were given the blessing of the International Assembly.

On the margins, so to speak, of the Congress, there were a number of stimulating events. The Central Office of Information organized (Continued on page 104)

# An Exhibition About Documentary Films?

## PETER BRADFORD

DOCUMENTARY films have been made in Britain for almost twenty years, yet it is probable that less than one per cent of cinema-goers even now know what a documentary film is. The makes of documentary films may like to think that 'documentary is the conscience of the cinema' but as yet it certainly is not the conscience of the super cinema. The documentary kingdom remains the grim hall with its wooden benches and croaky 16 mm projector: it preaches mainly to the converted and the would-be converted. Until they can obtain wider showing in the ordinary cinema, these films must speak mainly to teachers or probation officers or tomato growers—in fact are bound to be for the most part 'specialized films'. While these specialized films will probably always be a major part of documentary production, there are also a number of films of general interest made, which deserve to be seen by the public as a whole, and there could be many more if the public knew enough about them to realize their potential value. As long as there is no demand for this kind of film. producers will only rarely and under special cireumstances be able to make them. This problem is years old, and no one has made much progress towards a solution, but one way to create a greater interest in and knowledge of documentary films is to organize an exhibition about them, designed to explain in the simplest possible terms to anyone who may be coaxed inside the exhibition hall, what documentary films are doing, what they have done, what they hope to do, and how they are made.

In May of this year representatives of the British Film Institute, the British Council, COI, the British Film Academy, the Film Soeieties and British Documentary met to discuss a suggestion to produce an exhibition about documentary films. At the request of the meeting a sub-committee was formed of British Documentary and Film Society members to draw up a scheme of practical proposals. Incidentally, this sub-committee discovered that although Britain had pioneered the making of documentary films, there had never been an exhibition of this kind organized on the sub-

The sub-committee proposed that after explaining the wide field covered by documentary, the exhibition should give a brief history of the development of the documentary film, its purpose, and the technical methods it employed, and finally, after explaining the problems of distribution, show how the public themselves can get more documentary films shown.

The story of the exhibition would be told in a series of flat wall boards comprising brief text, stills and diagrams, to be grouped in four main sections.

A. What is a documentary film?

B. The history of documentary film-making.

How a documentary film is made today.

D. Who sees documentary films?

In between sections B and C would be technical apparatus in the middle of the room shown by a demonstrator. But the wall boards would be complete in themselves, and suitable for exhibition in other parts of the country. To design an exhibition for London alone would be to miss the point of having such an exhibition. It should be made available to schools, colleges, institutes, public libraries, museums and art galleries all over Britain.

It was also proposed that a film should be made, lasting ten to twenty minutes, which should be part of the exhibition if funds allowed. It would explain various points of technique. Among these points would be: appropriate and inappropriate camera angles, types of lighting methods of directing, and methods of cutting both picture and sound. Here are details of part of the exhibition taken from the original report.

SECTION A. WHAT IS A DOCUMENTARY FILM?

Board I. Are all these films documentaries? A collection of stills of some films made by feature companies and some by documentary companies, designed to get the viewer asking himself about the meaning of documentary. Stills (with a brief caption below each) from:

Millions Like Us, Song of Ceylon, Target for Tonight, Atomic Physics, Paisa, World of Plenty, Scarface, Your Children's Eyes.

Board 2. Yes, they are ALL documentaries-Because they have a truthful approach. This Board would consist only of text and would emphasize the documentary method in the choice and the approach to the subject.

Boards 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. A set of stills contrasting documentary and feature subjects and approach, e.g.

Reconstruction in a big studio against location. Use of people—for example, housewife in a feature film and housewife in a documentary.

SECTION C. HOW A DOCUMENTARY FILM IS MADE TODAY

Board 18. How a subject is chosen.

The film-maker finds a sponsor or the sponsor finds a film-maker.

How it is investigated. Examples of part of an actual treatment and shooting script.

Board 19. The Budget.

Showing a percentage breakdown of costs with possible contrast with feature costs.

Board 20. How the subject is made.

Introducing the producer and technicians by stills in order to establish them as persons and what they do.

Board 21. Stills of shooting on location and in a small studio.

Board 22. Cutting (sound and picture): Jaying of tracks, dubbing. Possibly demonstration panel showing principles of cutting using, say, Night Mail as an example, showing stills and Auden's verses, side by side with cutting positions marked.

Board 23. The work of the laboratories, Possibly a demonstration glass panel showing a mix, fade, dissolve, etc.

Board 24. Output.

Showing the number of documentary films produced in 1947. 'X' per cent suitable for general distribution, and 'Y' per cent designed specially for instructional or educational use. Of the total number suitable for general distribution only 'Z' per cent actually shown.

SECTION D. WIIO SEES DOCUMENTARY FILMS? Board 25. Difficulties in way of getting theatrical distribution in few brief captions, possibly with chart of distribution machinery.

Board 26. What gets into:

The ordinary cinema.

The specialist cinema.

Board 27. The development of non-theatrical distribution and in particular the work of the Film Society Movement.

Boards 28, 29. Specialized non-theatrical distribution. Use of films by schools, doctors, farmers, etc.

Board 30. The whole of this section to be in cartoon form with a little cartoon figure giving these different suggestions.

If you want to see more of these films-You can join a film society.

You can start a film society.

You can encourage your local authority to make use of its powers to show films under the new Local Government Act. You can write to your local cinema man-

If you have any other ideas let us have them. The exhibition would end with a blank pad of paper and a suggestion box beside it.

An exhibition of the sort proposed by the sub-committee outlined in this article would cost about a thousand pounds to design and assemble, and about another thousand to show in London, where an exhibition hall in a central position costs over a hundred pounds a week to hire. Last May a number of organizations were approached for money to make the exhibition possible, but as yet there have been no promises of help, except for the BH, who suggested it might be suitable for the 1951 Exhibition.

In the meantime a much more immediate request for an exhibition about documentary came to British Documentary from the Edinburgh Festival committee, British Documentary and the British Film Academy agreed to share costs, and on £20 a small exhibition was produced for Edinburgh, based on the ideas of the full-scale exhibition. The Edinburgh exhibition contained the ideas of boards 4, 5, 6, 7, 21, 28, 29, and part of 26 dealing with the ordinary cinema, and was shown in Film House for three weeks. Subsequently, it was shown privately in London for a couple of days. As a result a number of Film Society secretaries have

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# The Stuff of Documentary

# THE MAKING OF A MAGAZINE STORY

Ьy

## LESLIE SHEPARD

EVERY FOUR weeks we make a cine-magazine. A one-reel news film with four items in each issue. Each item a miniature film,

### Investigation

On the train you rummage through your satchel—pyjamas, toothbrush, soap and towel—and find the dope sheet. It may be a newspaper cutting, a typed quarto sheet, or just a scrap of paper with address and phone number of contacts and a scrawled mnemonic: 'Water is story but inter-cut production and watch men'... or something. This is your precognition of the sort of thing you expect to find.

On the train you let your imagination spread over the dope sheet. Keep fluid, supple, to find

and shape your story.

You will have three hours to sort out the ingredients. Get the facts—find the story. It will run for a minute and a half with something like twenty-three shots. You can draw on commentary, music, effects, and occasionally synch. Have you ever tried to write a triolet? It's a very precise verse form with infinite variation possible in its rigid pattern....

As well as your story (which you will script on the night train back or in the office within two hours next day) you will find out the routine details for lining-up—electricity supply, what lamps, time-tables, hotels, and so on. The item will be shot the day after tomorrow, unit returning by late train or following morning. The script will have passed through producer and sponsor, be fought and agreed in one afternoon. What is the story? There isn't one—yet! This is screen journalism.

That Export story. You spent the morning with the admin. boys at the docks, soaking up facts and figures; being told what to and what not to shoot; collecting data that would never register on celluloid. Then a junior employee guided you to a place you didn't want, but you kept him talking. Then you saw what you'd come down for—the desolate rail wagons, the broken rails running into pools of water—the shots, mind you, not the story.

But you kept a man talking and he wrote the story for you in the words of men who had lived with and by coal export; had seen prosperity, depression and the turn of the tide. The day when a ship brought foreign coal to a Welsh port and there were tears in the eyes of the men who unloaded her. And now, with coal being exported again, the images of that story were all around you-the men and the background. Trimming a cargo by the quay that held the ruined weigh-sheds where the seagulls and the man on the job ruffled the broken balance and rippled the reflection of the truck wheel, axle-deep in water. . . . That queer little feeling when you find the right pieces; they fall together and have a truth of their own.

Of course it never passed through that way. That was only part of the job. You took the

shots—yes!—stole them while pretending to get something else, but the sponsors wanted a broad canvas for the story, not epitome. This or that policy line wasn't quite right. They wanted you to squeeze in something the Press hand-out and the *Picture Post* story had said. . . . What of it? We re-vamped the story, fighting all the way. Two units worked over different locations and the new story fell together with the pieces of the old. The item was made on time.

You wonder if you'll make it this time. Something is going on somewhere, if you can see it, feel it, and record it. On how many other stories have you arrived in a strange place faced by an unexciting fact? You don't rush at it. Get people and let them talk. Watch. Waste time, but keep them talking, while your mind waits for the old magic—the pattern that turns the facts into a story.

### Shooting

On the train you chatted to the other two or three people who were there to help you shoot it. A cameraman and perhaps two assistants. Perhaps you played a bit upstage, knowing that different technicians have different temperaments.

The cameraman was your working partner for the next day's shooting. George was slow, indecisive; you had to talk deadpan facetious on the job to keep him going, be calm and never show the indecision you felt yourself. Michael was quick, competent and irritable. You had to fight him for the set-ups. If you

hesitated he'd be taking them himself. Always be one move ahead asking for the scenes and have some brave talk to justify what you were doing. Let him take over a scene you didn't really want, to keep the rhythm of work and get the essential ones without fuss. When you were older, perhaps, you would dominate people, the big, confident director. Action! In the meantime, these were early days. You really knew when the cameraman pulled you through on that pan with six characters (big stuff!) and you knew you made the item with those two cut-ins that he didn't want to take. A unit on a magazine story is small and compact enough to work out these things.

There wouldn't always be a script. There's a kind of story that is nearer to newsreel proper. You have to make a 'coverage'. This means you script the item in the camera. No second takes and no waiting for sun. You have an hour for the key establishing shots while you're waiting for the action, then for the scenes that the cameraman makes or breaks, because he must take over half your directing now.

But you watch all the time for the sort of thing that illuminates the action. Sometimes it happens in front of your eyes and you will have to reconstruct it. Sometimes a whisper to the cameraman and a little distraction will get the shot while the reality is still in it.

All the while you figure out how this or that is going to cut. You've had three key midshots—pegs for the editor, but on one of these you're committed on direction of action for the cut-ins (when you get a chance to get them)

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# Manhunt

# by

# ERIC GOLDSCHMIDT

WHEN YOU'RE stuck for a turn at your party, or when shuffling into a barber's chair, when stumped for a conversational opening or grazing on lush Devonshire meadows, when you wish to knock the idle hours between 5 and 5.30 with a particularly effective cudgel, try my new parlour game. It consists of marrying the word 'documentary' to as many disinterested parties as you can find. Documentary theatre, documentary materialism, documentary election platforms are easy ones. Documentary Court circulars, company reports and encyclicals shouldn't be precluded as time goes by.

In Melbourne, Australia, my landlord, 46year-old Fred Pick, manufacturing kitchenware, gave me the book of The Producer as a Christmas present. This, since it contained a chapter entitled 'The Film at War' and Pick had been at war with films for years. Too expensive, he said. I began reading the book of The Producer with much alacrity. I pictured Him as being a member of history's great family of producers, like Thales the Miletian (who produced the universe out of nothingwith-water), St Thomas the Aguinas and Duns the Scot (who produced the universe out of class distinctions and after-thoughts), and Marx (who annihilated the universe with practically the same armoury).

This Producer, then, established a universe with celluloid and ideas. The more I considered this formula in Melbourne, Australia, the more I became convinced that one must investigate these cosmic complications. One must go to America, obviously, in order to get the proper cosmic outlook. And this I set out to do.

Here we bring in some quick-fire transformations. Let's have the contract towards the US Immigration authorities whereby I undertake not to assassinate the President of the US or his lawful wife. And then the chinless mate of the 'Marine Phoenix' who refuses me a job, followed by an ocean scene where I'm aboard ship, casually mixing with the passengers and being supplied with cheese biscuits and sticks of celery. Since the ship passes through the tropics, we'll have a sweating night-watchman who paces up and down, cursing all stowaways, while I sleep guilelessly in a private bath-tub, where the climate isn't hard on me but the unbending pressed steel shape of the tub isn't so good.

For a laugh we'll introduce Father, of the Australian version of 'Life with Father'. He's written a play which no Australian publisher will tackle and he's happy aboard organizing competitions for teen-agers. He was a zestful old soak with hair dyed bright orange. 'Why do you run around like this off-stage?' I asked—and Father replied: 'Boy, I've been in show business for 37 years. If you'd been in show business that long, you'd dye your hair lime green.' And a nippy-looking passenger turns

round at this point, sighing 'Ah, yes! How green was my father.'

To describe the sea journey a little more dramatically, we'll have three one-minute episodes (a) when I developed a skin rash and a negro steward called Virtue (the less said about this, the better) went into the surgery for some Vitamin C tablets, (b) when on the last night aboard, everyone dressed and I had to rake up a pontoon school smartly so that my shirt sleeves wouldn't attract any attention (previous sartorial snares had occurred during boat drills) and (c) when it was all over, when Father had given me the all-clear and I had pushed down the crew's gangway with an outdated pass and sat in a pub in San Francisco called 'Mark Hopkins', when fourteen courses of food arrived unendingly and I begged for biscuits and a few sticks of celery; which hadn't happened since the day of Aimee Semple McPherson.

From there we'll hitch-hike 500 miles south to Los Angeles. We see the blessed blend of Spanish architecture, American oil interests and scenic resilience. We'll drive past garages, drug stores, realtors, junk jewellery shops; garages, realtors, junk jewellery shops, drug stores. For ten miles—nothing but: this is Hollywood.

A few inquiries established that the Producer had been here all right, though he's left for Mexico and the odds are he'll arrive in New York. The Producer doesn't seem to thrive on Californian voodoo, and when I stated that screen tests, Readers Digests and the Huntington Library were of no interest to me, that only a conversation with the Producer would end my journeys, people outstripped their daily superlatives declaring me to be the 'most out of this worldest, fluid driven jerk they'd ever laid eyes on'. The Cultural Relations Division of the State Department is in agreement with this, and shipped me to New York.

This gives me an opportunity of sliding right through the chromium-plated paradise, past a drought in Salt Lake City, past the genuine corn belt, past the indictment to civilization called Chicago. In New York an ex-GI sold me a beautiful Papuan amulet reciting the string of bad luck he'd had while carting it around. This was in West 56th Street, where I'd just been told the Producer was leaving for Britain within a day or two.

To cut a long story short, I arrived in London full of cussedness and un-American intentions. At the time of the Graphic Arts Conference I was an usher in a West End cinema, seeing Spring in Park Lane until I did.

The conference was the shot though. It had been arranged in honour of the Producer whom I thought of tackling during the lunch break. Instead I ran into another Australian bum who blew his top about restrictive practices in the ACT and how Britain assists the Australian economy by breeding hogs in Queensland.

After the Chairman had passed a vote of thanks, it was 6.30 and there was no point in going back to the cinema. Besides, I felt a hunter's pride in having seen the Producer with my naked eye. I got to know that he stayed in the Exmouth Hotel, So I stocked up some sandwiches, settling in at the Exmouth lounge in order to clinch the matter.

I spent some two hours ignoring a battery of nosey bell boys, lift attendants, house detectives and mustard-ridden stooges with braided lapels. Once a particularly wide dame stared at me as if my newspaper concealed malicious intent, instead of sandwiches. But I've played poker with characters worse than this, and I acted as if she had a run in clubs and no more, which was indeed the case.

By eleven I'd telephoned the switch and got His room number. The lounge was emptying out and I arrived on the fourth floor as if I was quite somebody else who'd never squatted in the fover at all.

There were some chairs at the end of the corridor and I started on the sandwiches. quietly and in keeping with the hotel's wellbred chastity. A trio of drunks could be heard. business people evidently who had made a night of it and couldn't stop haggling. I thought I'd humour them when they stood in front of me, calling me 'George' and asking if I had a sandwich to spare. 'Certainly,' I said and gave them one, when they contrived a tutti of no mean size. They were house detectives again. They would invoke the Vagrancy Act, and dial 999. Within twenty seconds of this speech I could see that all the publicity which had been put out on behalf of the Exmouth Hotel was complete moonshine. I scrammed, chasing past the phalanx of bell boys, night waiters, hall porters and doormen, confusedly mashing a string of sausages in the revolving door.

The only thing I could do, was to see Him early in the morning and I went to Lyons in order to pass the time with a cup of coffee every hour. The rest of that night . . . the sharpies and shysters and chauffeurs . . . shindigs with Welsh football fans and shandies at Covent Garden . . . it's hard to sort it out chronologically and it doesn't matter, anyhow.

At eight-thirty in the morning He spoke to me. Could I interview Him, I asked, on behalf of 'Newsweek'; myeditor, Iadded, was bothered about the fundamental education of—of—Sam Goldwyn. He admonished me not to talk rubbish, moreover He'd dined with the editor of 'Newsweek' only ten days ago. I then clicked the telephone a couple of times and switched over to the dry-cleaned accent of George Sanders. 'News Review,' I fluted. He must have misunderstood me. He referred me to His secretary for details.

As I came back from the barber's I noticed Him in the dining room, and this was a moment of timeless delight, Between cereals and kipper I told Him the whole story and He apologized for being in such a hurry. His train would leave for Brussels very shortly, but on His return, in three weeks, I must ring Him up.

That happened three months ago. He's extremely busy now and I'm told by His secretary that Empire questions cram His time-table. To make quite sure of talking to Him, I'm going to Melbourne, Australia, where He is due to arrive within the next month or two I shall stand on the wharf with streamers and throw them towards his boat. And He, I'm sure, will throw back celluloid and ideas—at last.

# Edinburgh in Retrospect

by

# BASIL WRIGHT

II MIGHT be worth inquiring first what purpose is intended to be served by holding an international festival of documentary. It is presumably something more than—to paraphrase the late Miss Stein—'a festival is a festival is a festival'. The Edinburgh affair lasted three weeks, on every day of which there was a minimum of two shows; and all but a few shows were packed out, people being turned away even at the 2,000-seater Caley cinema,

What did they expect and want, and what did they get, these 20,000 odd folk who came trooping to Film House, to the Caley, the Rutland (children's films), and the Central Hall (educational films)? Incidentally the competition was pretty fierce, what with such plums as The Three Estates, the Glyndebourne Opera, Barrault in Hamlet, the Ballet, the Huddersfield Choir, Menuhin, Cortot, Boyd Neel, the Halle, Concertgebouw, the Augusteo, and the boozing.

In any case it didn't seem a particularly specialized audience. There were, of course, distinguished documentary practitioners from overseas, and a regular trickle of celebrities from other walks of life. There were even a few-a very few-documentary people from the British Isles. But the great majority seemed to be ordinary folk interested in documentary, a fact which perhaps we shouldn't be as surprised at as we sometimes are. Norman Wilson, Forsyth Hardy and their Edinburgh Film Guild colleagues certainly took a risk, on moncy and on prestige, in running the Festival, and I think they, too, were surprised at its success; but they shouldn't be, because the interest shown in documentary is due, amongst other things, to the vigorous and voluntary propaganda carried out over some twenty years by progressive bodies like the Guild.

Apart from people who came because they couldn't get in anywhere else, or out of idle curiosity, the great majority of the audiences sought, I imagine, a survey of the use of film for social purpose in countries all over the world, a comparison with what is being done here, and, not least, the stimulus on creative and aesthetic levels which can and should arise from this particular sort of film-making. To provide these things and especially to provide sources of stimulation and emulation to both makers and users, was the purpose of the Festival.

It is fair to say that the purpose was well fulfilled. The films came from many countries,

and showed great variety of technique. On some levels they were as interesting for their similarities as for their contrasts; for instance, the Yugoslavian film on Child Welfare differed hardly at all from the films on the same subject from other countries—this more particularly as regards the techniques of child care shown. Here you had a reminder of the internationale of special interests which the documentary movement sets out to serve.

More importantly, the festival revealed an enormous variety as well. Apart from the steady flow of competent, reasonably interesting films on the bread and butter level there were, thank goodness, a really encouraging number of creative and exciting jobs, and not a few technical experiments. I would say that the proportion of films which left vivid and lasting impressions of a high order was remarkably high. Here, at any rate, is one observer's list.

There were eleven films of the highest order. Of these I put William Levitt's The Quiet One right at the top. This 16 mm production, obviously made on something less than a shoestring, deals with problems of juvenile delinquency in the New York area, and centres on the case of one particular negro boy. It shows causes, effects, and the problems not only of cure but also of those social conditions which provide every opportunity for recurrence. I'm not competent to judge the psychological techniques concerned, though they are clearly not altogether the same as those in this country, any more than the emotional attitude to the question has much similarity with that revealed in such films as Children of the City or Children on Trial; but it is quite certain that The Ouiet One is on all counts one of the most brilliant efforts at presenting a case history ever to be put on the screen. It has a splendid script. brilliant and disturbing use of sound, and intimate shooting of life in the raw of a sort seldom if ever achieved. It is to be hoped that DFN will find space for a full review of this

Next on the list I would put Henri Storck's seven-reel film on *Rubens*. Not only is this a tour de force of film-making (with some interesting technical innovations) but also it opens up completely new vistas in the use of film for the study and analysis of the visual arts.

Then, of course, Flaherty's Louisiana Story, a piece of sustained poetry which should surely

give enormous satisfaction to everyone other than those who still want Flaherty to be something other than what he is.

Add Rossellini's Germany Year Zero-a wavering cry of despair, uneven in technique but finally redeemed by the searing intensity of the last three reels; Eldridge's two imaginative and often brilliant films Three Dawns to Sydney and Waverley Steps; Vedrès' astonishing compilation Paris 1900, which re-creates the atmosphere and mystique of a period in a way which reveals new possibilities in adding a more intimate reality to history teaching; Yannik Bellon's extraordinary study Goëmons, reminiscent at times of Vigo; Crawley's strangely moving Indian legend in colour, The Loon's Necklace, told entirely by means of British Columbian Indian masks; Nettezza Urbana, an Italian documentary which brings to the prosaic subject of street-cleaning qualities of visuals and sound which remind one of some of the earlier GPO experiments like Coalface; and Sucksdorff's Divided World, an amazing tour de force about the kill-or-bekilled life of a northern forest at night.

If space allowed I could add another list of runners-up—another dozen at least; I could refer to the impact of the Canadian films, which came in such variety of subject matter and style (as well as numbers) that they had special shows; and I could mention three films which tied for the booby prize—and one alas! was British.

It seems likely that next year the Festival will be repeated. In that case the committee ought to consider one or two points. Firstly, Film House only seats 60, and despite repeat programmes this is quite inadequate to deal with the potential audiences, If a larger hall could be found, the small Film House theatre could be used for more specialized shows; this is something the Festival has hitherto lacked. Secondly, some thought should be given to trying to build more of the programmes round specific purposes, and not confine this, as at present, to the special shows of educational and children's films. Thirdly, if lectures are to be given, as they were this year, time and place must be geared to attract an audience.

These arc minor criticisms however. The Festival provides a unique chance to observe the achievements of documentary on a global level. Is it too much to hope that next year something will be done to encourage British Documentary workers to attend?

# The Stuff of Documentary

(Continued from page 100)

and you need a reconstructed covering long shot after the real action is finished. You watch for position and obvious continuity.

On any story you might need to work out how a sequence of six scenes on a long cut story can say the same thing in only three of the scenes if the story has to be cut short. You learn your savers, but you try to economize on footage, because no magazine editor has time to think about a two thousand foot rough assembly for a two hundred foot cut length story.

Once in a while, there's the story on margin. Deadline for everything—one day. You went down to a factory with a cameraman; investigated, scripted and lined up for lamps in a couple of hours. Script okayed by telephone. When the lamps came in two hours later you shot the story. In the tea-break you telephoned a commentary to the crew standing by the microphone—final commentary session for the issue. No time for opticals; you did the fadein in the camera. Two days later with the issue mixing on time you were on another story. . . . You pleased the editor that time because every set-up was used and nothing was missing. It was not an epic-it was just an eighty-foot magazine item.

### Editing

Dick, who puts the pieces together in the cutting-room at lightning speed, is an old newsreel man. He has your continuity sheets and a script, but could work without either. If it's on film he knows what you're after. If it's

not there he'll tell you—and if you want to learn you'll listen.

There is a logic to this sort of film that you learn by painful experience when the producer and editor see your rushes. You can't use those long beloved pans, all of twenty feet a time. That complex sequence on a simple action between three people must go in two six-foot cuts or be left on the floor. The finished item is something like two hundred feet—remember?—and if you shoot in thirty-foot key scenes there will be sore heads.

This sort of film is like a *Time* news-story. In a script of twenty-three odd shots, with commentary, music and effects, everything counts. If it's not essential why put it in? No room to spread yourself on high-falutin' buildup. No room for commentary clichés. It finds you out.

You can't get by with a brush-off job. You have to feel it and mean it. That line about 'Hard work?—yes!—But these men are doing a great job' or '... these women are doing a man's job'. The machinery sequence that reads: 'From rough castings the cones are machined to specification. Great care is needed in checking these cones because they house the all-inportant lens.' Out!

The magazine item has a form and balance all its own. In journalism the key phrase, the right adjective. In film, the right image married to the essential word.

Of course, when you've created a masterpiece it's hard to have a sponsor fiddle with the commentary on the final check-up before recording. If you weren't on a magazine film it might keep you awake at nights composing a DFN article about what's wrong. It can be hard when the telephones of three Government departments converge on one sheet of foolscap while the commentary session ticks away and the recordist gets impatient. But the arts and crafts of film direction don't begin and end on location. And a sense of proportion is the first part of your film conscience.

After eight months of this, where are you going?

I built a coal mine in South Wales. I sunk a shaft at Nottingham. Between twenty locations I counted a few sequences; I lost ten feet at Derby. By way of Victoria and St Pancras I captured sight and sound of many men working; King's Cross and Paddington carried a pattern of words. By night train to Scotland I crossed a border of thought.

What's the next assignment?

On the train, you hope this one will be a straightforward policy story that will run so sweetly that nobody will niggle. Because you know in the last corner of your mind that if a story is good enough—if it is observed, imagined and recorded with that spark of art which the cameraman, editor and director who share the creative experience are too embar rassed to mention then it speaks for itself It's the raw stuff of documentary—the image of life and truth in a pin-sized magazine story. But this evening, just after birth, it will look very raw and naked on its clean sheet of foolscap, and very tempting to play with. It has godparents-producer and sponsors-who will have their own ideas about education. . . Can you move them?

But certain problems are not your affair, although you should know about them. Two organizers and a producer hatch this magazine at weekly conferences with the sponsors. There is a plan of work and a policy line on every item. You may not believe that the weight of the gap between fact and film lies elsewhere than in this smoky railway carriage—but have we ever let you down yet?

Investigation one day, including travelling: scripting—same evening or next day; laid on for shooting tomorrow or the day after. Four items a month.

Other films can boast an eight to twelve week investigation; a theme with social implications and high policy. Not for the magazine the paper thought and political negotiation, the firm stand and protracted compromise. Good, bad or promising the item is shot, and next week—perhaps tomorrow—you will be making another journey. This way a young technician learns in film—writes in celluloid. Paper is something shed in the dead files two days later.

In the train . . . wondering whether the old magic will work. That little tinge of apprehension that you pray to keep, compounded of excitement, curiosity and imagination. This is screen journalism. On the job again, you are playing with the raw material of documentary—the making of a magazine item.

# DATA Member of the Federation of Documentory Film Units

### MINING REVIEW: 2ND SERIES: NUMBER 2

Miners on the Land: Davy Lamp on a Training Course: Children's Gala: Sinking a new Pit

has delivered during

the month of September

### SCOTTISH UNIVERSITIES

A film for the Scottish Home Department, directed by Francis Gysin, photographed by W. Suschitzky

### BRITISH STEEL

A second progress report on the Steel Company of Wales' Development Scheme for showing in South America

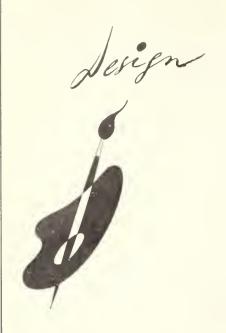
### PROBATION OFFICER

A thirty-minute story to recruit new Probation Officers, directed by J.B. Holmes, photographed by James Ritchie, written by Budge Cooper

DOCUMENTARY TECHNICIANS ALLIANCE LTD · 21 SOHO SQUARE W1 · GERRARD 2826

# Documentary Film News

We regret that it has been necessary to produce Sept-Oct as one issue. Similarly, there will be one number to cover the remainder of the year, Monthly publication will begin again in January.



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# D for Denmark

Documentary in Denmark 1940-48 is the title of an impressive catalogue just published by the Danish Central Film Library in English. One hundred films about Danish life are listed against the changing background of the last eight years of war, occupation, liberation and peace. Attractively presented with plenty of stills as well as informative detail, the catalogue is well worth looking at.

In an introduction Arthur Elton has paid tribute to the achievements of the movement which made these films possible. The effective growth of the Danish documentary group dates from 1940 and the German invasion. Over the subsequent years it did a great deal to keep alive the country's traditions and way of living. At the end of the war, the movement emerged, confident and skilled. It had produced many films it could be proud of, and it had made its own particular contribution to documentary film-making. It had brought in wit and humour and a warm sense of life. The pity is that relatively so few of these films have been made available in Britain, apart from festival performances. This is one of the directions in which this catalogue should be of posi-

A further publication, *Motion Pictures in Denmark* by Ebbe Neergaard, the director of the Danish Central Film Library, has also just appeared in English. It gives a clear and readable picture of the Danish cinema business with particular reference to the production and exhibition of documentary films.

All commercial exhibition of films is regulated by a Cinema Act of 1938. Among its various provisions, there is one which might well produce alarm and confusion in the ranks of British exhibitors if it were applied in this country.

'The licensee (the manager) shall attend to the management of the picture theatre in person and have the artistic responsibility for the same. In the choice of films the licensee shall take care that such films as are exhibited are from a cultural and artistic point of view the most valuable. He shall not be prevented by any agreement from deciding freely and independently on the repertoire of the theatre and the rest of its management.'

As a result of this Act there are no foreignowned cinemas in Denmark and no circuits. In addition it lays down that a part of every cinema performance can be reserved for the showing of cultural and educational value. These films are distributed to cinemas free by the Central Film Library. In this way some fifteen to twenty documentary films get cinema distribution each year. Production finance is provided from a Film Fund which is supported by a levy on the net profits of the cinemas.

Neergaard's pamphlet contains a lot of information of this kind which is well worth study and comparison. In fact, the pamphlet and the catalogue, together with the September issue of the *Dansk Filmforbund Bulletin* which is an international number published in English, give an up-to-date and encouraging picture of the state of documentary in Denmark.

Documentary in Denmark 1940-48, published by Statens Filmcentral, Copenhagen, 1948. Price 5s.

Motion Pictures in Denmark, by Ebbe Neergaard, published by Statens Filmcentral. Copenhagen, 1948.

Dansk Filmforbund Bulletin. special international issue, Vol. 2, No. 10. September 1948.

The introduction to *Documentary in Denmark* was printed in the October 1947 issue of *DNL*. Copies of this catalogue and of *Dansk Filmforbund Bulletin* are on sale at Film Centre, prices 5s. and 1s. respectively.

# ISFA Congress

(Continued from page 98)

a discussion meeting between producers of scientific films, at which John Grierson and Denis Forman introduced to their foreign colleagues the older and the rising generations of scientific film-makers in Britain. The Royal Microscopical Society invited delegates to a reception at which they and some hundreds of British microscopists saw a programme of films by Percy Smith, Dr R. G. Canti, and contemporary specialists, introduced by Dr Arthur Hughes. As a pendant to the Congress, the Sciences Committee of SFA organized on October 12 a whole day conference on the film in scientific research, presided over by Sir Robert Watson-Watt. The Congress ended with a reception to delegates, given by the British Council.

This, breathlessly and inadequately, is the

stop-press résumé of the work of the second International Scientific Film Congress, Twentyfive countries and UNESCO accepted the invitation to be present. Next year, the International Association will meet in Brussels, to take stock of what was set in train at the 1948 London Congress.

Mr John Maddison was elected a Vice-President of the ISFA for the coming year. The other Vice-President is Clifford Burmeston of the National Library of Australia. The President is Jean Korngold of Poland, the Hon Secretary, Jean Painleve of France, and the Hon Treasurer, Luc Haesaerts of Belgium.

# Films Shown at Edinburgh

Owing to the large number of films shown at Edinburgh this year Scottish Universities (21 minutes). The history, we are unable to publish full critical reviews. The following is a survey of the films shown, classified according to the country of origin together with a brief summary of the theme.

### ARGENTINE

Sleeping Villages (23 minutes). A survey of the life and customs of the Colla Indians, an obscure nomadic tribe, which lives in the desolate highlands on the borders of Argentine, Chile and Bolivia.

### AUSTRALIA

Britain Down Under (20 minutes). A picture of Tasmania, illustrating its close resemblance in customs, climate and geography to those of the British Isles.

Honey Blossom Trail (11 minutes). The story of how an Australian bee-keeper maintains his supply of honey by moving his hives from one area to another as the blossoms become ex-

Spotlight on Australian Ballet (50 minutes). This film tells the story of the development of native ballet companies and ballet in Australia. It also includes a number of excerpts from classical ballets.

## **AUSTRIA**

The Organ, Queen of Instruments (23 minutes). An historical survey of the principles and development of the organ, leading up to the rebuilding of the great organ upon which Anton Bruckner composed much of his music, and a performance of his Te Deum.

## BELGIUM

Agneau Mystique (9 minutes). A detailed examination of the famous Van Eyck triptych of the Paschal Lamb at Ghent.

Chansons de Toile (12 minutes). Flax-growing and the preparation of linen in Belgium, together with examples of some of the uses to which the finest linens are put, such as the weaving of tapestry, etc.

Rubens (70 minutes). A study of the painter Rubens, his life and his art. A brilliant use of the camera aided by the superimposition of lines reveals the painter's ideas and discloses aspects of form and composition, which make this an outstanding example of the contribution that the film can make to the appreciation

The World of Paul Delvaux (10 minutes). An analysis of the work of the surrealist painter Paul Delvaux, in which clever cutting and camera movement combine to give a vivid picture not only of the technique but also of the mind of the artist.

A Plan to Work On (28 minutes). This film illustrates the solution of some of the problems of town planning, based upon the evolution of a town planning scheme for Dunferm-

Avalanche Patrol (25 minutes). A film, made in Switzerland, which shows the precautions which are taken to safeguard against damage from avalanches.

Charting the Seas (20 minutes). A survey of the Hydographic Service of the Navy, which shows details of the way in which sea depths, tides, wrecks, coast lines, etc., are charted.

Eyes to See With (19 minutes). The importance of using one's eyes. This film takes for its theme the idea that many people miss much of the beauty of the world because they do not use their eyes sufficiently, and illustrates some of the things which can be experienced if they develop their powers of observation,

Hill Sheep Farm (22 minutes). The life and problems of the Scottish hill sheep farmer through the cycle of the year.

Lord Siva Dances (23 minutes). Made partly in India, this film shows examples of classical Indian dances and their modern variations in different parts of the country.

Mining Review No. 10 (10 minutes). One of a series of monthly magazines, produced for the National Coal Board. It includes items on fluorescent lighting, dust suppression, women canteen workers and scenes from a May-day gala in Edinburgh.

New Town (10 minutes). A cartoon illustrating the importance and the improvements in health and amenities which will result from the new satellite towns which are now being planned. Precise Measurements for Engineers (32 minutes). The work of the Metrology Department of the National Physical Laboratory in making and checking the gauges and other standards which are essential for accuracy in all engineering work.

School in Cologne (17 minutes). Made with the assistance of German technicians, this film shows the physical and human difficulties which the authorities face in trying to rebuild an educational system in war-ravaged Ger-

traditions, difficulties and future possibilities of the four Scottish universities, St Andrew's, Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh,

Steps of the Ballet (30 minutes). An explanation of the basic steps of ballet dancing, followed by a demonstration of the growth and development of a completed ballet.

The Edge of the World (65 minutes). This feature film is a revised edition of the earlier one of the same name. It tells the story of the life of members of a community on the remote island of Foula in the Hebrides, Cut off from the mainland in winter, they live in the primitive conditions of their forefathers the year round. But eventually difficulties are too great and they leave to seek their fortune on the mainland.

The Story of Printing (42 minutes), Part of a visual unit, this film, which is divided into sections, tells with model simplicity and clarity the story of the origins and development of printing from the earliest time to the present

They Travel By Air (22 minutes). Designed as a staff training film, this shows in an amusing fashion the difficulties that BOAC personnel must expect and the importance of the service they render to their passengers.

Three Dawns to Sydney (61 minutes), Flying from Britain to Australia, the aeroplane is a link between many different people in many different countries. The film tells the story of an incident in the life of people in Sicily, Palestine, India, Singapore and Australia respectively, as the plane passes over them.

Waverley Steps (31 minutes). This is a film about Edinburgh, which attempts to evoke its atmosphere by interweaving a number of small unconnected incidents in the life of people who live there.

Your Children's Sleep (22 minutes). Designed for parents, this film shows how children need sleep for their physical and mental development. It illustrates some of the causes of bad or disturbed sleep, which with understanding and good management can be overcome.

Your Very Good Health (11 minutes). A cartoon which illustrates the advantages of the new National Health Insurance scheme,

### BULGARIA

Men of the Mists (19 minutes). A story of the lives of the men who man the meteorological stations in the high mountains of Bulgaria and who thereby provide a weather forecasting service of great importance.

### CANADA

A Feeling of Hostility (25 minutes). This is the second in a series designed to illustrate the psychological background of social maladjustment. It tells the story of a girl who, because of her home background, grew up in a state of emotional insecurity and with a longing for love which she could not satisfy. The result in her case was high achievement, but at the expense of personal satisfaction in her relations with other people.

Boogie Doodle; Hoppity Pop; Marching the Colours (3 minutes each). In these three abstraet colour eartoons, made by Norman Me-Laren, patterns, shapes and colours dance and weave to the music of gay little tunes.

Home Town Paper (22 minutes). A story of life in a Canadian small town community centred round the local weekly newspaper, which reports their lives and doings.

Horizons du Quebec (30 minutes). A lively account of the factors, historical, racial, rural and industrial, which have contributed to make Quebec what it is today.

Hungry Minds (10 minutes). In feeding the bodies of the hungry children of the world the needs of their minds are often forgotten. The film stresses the need for an adequate supply of books and facilities for learning in many

Inside the Atom (11 minutes). A brief account of the source and some of the possible uses of atomic energy.

It's Fun To Sing (11 minutes). The pleasures of amateur choir singing, based on the activities of the Bell singers, a small amateur choir which is famous in Canada.

Making Bread in the 13th Century (4 minutes). A short cartoon with a rhymed commentary whose theme is that of the title.

Stanley Takes a Trip (9 minutes). A colour eartoon for children, which explains the importance of a balanced diet and the different constituents which it should include.

The Connors Case (35 minutes). A reconstruction of an authentic case from the files of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, showing how every device of modern science is used in the tracking down and eventual capture of a mur-

The Loon's Necklace (10 minutes). Played by characters wearing original native masks, this delightful film reconstructs a Columbian Indian legend about the way in which the Loon got the white ring round his neek.

Maps We Live By (10 minutes). Made for the United Nations, this film stresses the international importance of maps, traces briefly the history of map-making up to the modern system of aerial contour photography, and illustrates some of their uses.

Who Will Teach Your Child (31 minutes). The importance of teaching to children and, therefore, to the community. The film uses dramatized incidents to illustrate the scope of the good teacher's job and the factors which can keep them away from teaching resulting in the use of untrained and unsuitable teachers. Teaching should be a profession, of importance second to none.

### CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Made in Czechoslovakia (11 minutes). Partly in colour, this film shows examples of the

beautiful work produced by the skill of Czech glass-workers.

### DENMARK

Breaking the Ice (9 minutes). The story of the Danish ice-breakers which keep the channel separating Copenhagen from the mainland free from ice so that the shipping which must supply the city can get through during the

Children of Poland (12 minutes). The care of starving Polish children by the Danish Red Cross after the war.

Danish Village Church (12 minutes.) The development of village churches in Denmark from the old small and plain Romanesque churches to the more elaborate examples of Gothic architecture, which are built on and around them.

Ditte Child of Man (101 minutes). Every minute a child is born; what will be its fate? Posing this question, this, a feature film of much power and beauty, directed by Henning Jensen, tells the story of a girl, born illegitimate, poor and unwanted, who suffers misfortune after misfortune until finally she herself returns home pregnant. Her unassuming goodness and love survive all her miseries, and one is left with the feeling that in her uncomplaining acceptance, the evil done to her is somehow turned to something positive and good.

Kutter H.71 (10 minutes). The building and launching of a Danish trawler.

Paper (13 minutes). A brief but lively account of the history of paper-making and its innumerable uses today.

Shaped by Danish Hands (15 minutes). An account of Danish skill and craftsmanship in the design and making of pottery and furniture.

They Reached a Ferry (11 minutes). The dan-Dreyer's script, with its masterly control of tempo and suspense, make this a brilliant and terrifying lesson in Road Safety.

Those Blasted Kids (94 minutes). This feature film, also directed by Henning Jensen, tells the story of the adventures of a group of children from a block of working-class flats in Copenhagen when tracking down the thief who had falsely 'framed' the caretaker who befriended them. The acting of the children is spontaneous and delightful.

### EIRE

Next Please (11 minutes). A road safety film, showing examples of the stupid actions of pedestrians and motorists and the conse-

### FRANCE

Aubusson (15 minutes). The revival of the ancient craft of tapestry weaving at Aubusson. The film shows the work of the artist in designing the tapestry as well as the work of the weavers in translating the design into reality. Goemons (24 minutes). A brilliant if depressing study of life on a small island off the coast of France, where under conditions of virtual slavery, a small group of men harvest seaweed.

La Rose et La Reseda (8 minutes). This is an attempt to provide a visual interpretation of a poem by Louis Aragon commemorating the shooting of two members of the French Resistance movement by the Germans. The poem

# VISUAL AIDS IN SCIENTIFIC & They Reached a Ferry (11 minutes). The dangers of speeding on a motor cycle. Carl AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

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itself is beautifully spoken by Jean Louis Bar-

Les Santons (28 minutes). A legend current in Provence of happenings on Christmas Eve has been made into a ballet, and is shown here danced by the ballet company of the Paris

Paris 1900 (76 minutes). This is a remarkable compilation of life in Paris between 1900 and 1914 made from contemporary material. Politicians, statesmen, royalty, artists, comedians, great figures of the stage, fashions and a number of odd items are all interwoven to provide a fascinating picture of the period. The film owes much to its music by Guy Bernard, which is as pointed and witty as the film itself.

### **GERMANY**

Hunger (13 minutes). Designed for German audiences, this film clearly and simply drives home the fact that hunger is not a German monopoly. As a result of the war, world food production is inadequate for the needs of its people. It points to the responsibility of the Germans for this situation and indicates the remedies which they themselves must take.

It's Up To You (16 minutes). This film contrasts two Germanies—the ancient, beautiful, peace-loving, industrious Germany with the brutal, bellicose, regimented Germany which has so recently led them to disaster. Which path they will follow is their choice for the future.

# ITALY

Bianchi Pascoli (15 minutes). A beautifully photographed film which shows the Allied war graves in Italy and how the Italians are tending them.

Citta Senza Tempo (11 minutes). Life in the town of Pompeii is described as the camera

surveys the ruins.

Corteo dei Re Magi (11 minutes). A study of the painting by Gossoli of the coming of the

three kings of Bethlehem.

Dramma Di Christo (11 minutes). A study of the life of Christ built up with masterly skill from the frescoes of Giotto in the Schrovegni Chapel, Padua.

Germany Year Zero (80 minutes). This, Rossellini's latest feature, is a bleak study of Berlin in defeat. The story centres round a small boy, Edmund, whose father is ill, whose elder brother is hiding from the police and, therefore, cannot work, and whose sister is driven to frequent night clubs in the hope of getting food and cigarettes from Allied soldiers. Edmund keeps the family going by bartering on the Black Market, and stealing what he can. He is persuaded to poison his father, but later, overcome by doubts and remorse, he himself commits suicide.

Nettezza Urbana (12 minutes). A delightful human study of the street-cleaners in Italy.

Romantici a Venezia (11 minutes). Venice as it would have appeared to some of the great romantics who visited it. The sound track repeats the words of Byron, de Musset, D'Annunzio and Chopin, as the camera shows us the

Zoo di Petra (6 minutes). A study of the domestic sculpture of the Romans from the Vatican museum which by brilliant editing succeeds in giving a sense of life and movement to the static carvings of animals.

### INDIA

Mother (12 minutes), Child (18 minutes). These are the first two films of a series made for the United Nations dealing with the Indian Village Welfare services. They show an interesting picture of life in primitive villages and the difficulties which face the trained social workers who try to persuade them to more hygienic methods of living. The first deals with maternity care, the second with child welfare. Designed for native audiences, the tempo is slow and the treatment simple.

### NORWAY

The Battle of Heavy Water (91 minutes). Made in co-operation with the French this is an exciting reconstruction of the struggle to get possession of the stocks of heavy water, essential for atomic research, and to sabotage the heavy water factory in Norway. The parts of the saboteurs are played by the men who were actually responsible for the work, and every incident is shown as it happened in reality.

### POLAND

Apple Blossom (18 minutes), A pastoral film showing life in the country at the coming of spring.

The Dragon of Cracow (22 minutes). A delightful puppet film which tells a fairytale about a poor shoemaker, who killed the cruel dragon which was ravaging the country, and married the King's daughter.

The Flood (15 minutes). An exciting film which shows the damage done by floods during the spring of 1947 in Poland, and the slow heart-

breaking work of reconstruction after they had abated.

### SPAIN

Arcos de la Frontera (14 minutes). A study of the people of the town of Arcos de la Frontera in Spain and of the country around it.

Balele (7 minutes). A film of great vitality showing the native dances of Spanish Guinea. Un Dia en Santiago (11 minutes), A picture of the town of Santiago, where the shrine of St James of Compostella is situated.

### SWEDEN

A Divided World (9 minutes). This, a new film by Sucksdorff, contrasts the cruelty of wild life in the forest with the peace and beauty of the church on its outskirts. The film is remarkable for the superb photography of the animals. The Open Road (13 minutes). This, another film by Sucksdorff, gives a picture of life in a gipsy encampment, in the north of Sweden. The Sacrifice (12 minutes). A remarkable and vivid reconstruction of the rite of human sacrifice as it was practised in Sweden in very early

The Train (20 minutes). The story of a journey in Sweden as seen from a train.

### UNITED NATIONS

Clearing the Way (33 minutes). The need for building the United Nations Headquarters in New York, how it is being planned, and what it will look like.

First Steps (10 minutes). The treatment and rehabilitation of crippled children.

Searchlight on the Nations (21 minutes). The

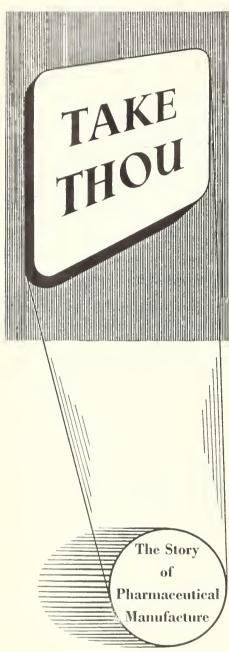
# PHOTOMICROGRAPHY

# Scientific and Nature Films

Supervising: Dorothy Grayson, B.Sc.

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right of nations to an international exchange of information and the need for a pooling of knowledge and experience between countries,

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Chinese Shadow Play (11 minutes). This film gives a charming example of one of the oldest entertainments in the world—the Chinese shadow play—and shows how it is worked.

Florida-Wealth or Waste (22 minutes). Behind the beauty spots of Florida the land is going to waste. The film surveys the rich natural resources of Florida, which are slowly being eaten away, and makes a strong plea for a firm policy of conservation.

Henry Moore (18 minutes). A comprehensive study of the work of Henry Moore as a sculp-

tor and artist.

Louisiana Story (79 minutes). Robert Flaherty's new film is a beautiful and moving story of life in the Louisiana swamp lands. The hero is a small French-Canadian boy, simple and superstitious, but happy with his animals and his games. Then to the swamp come the oil men, and soon a great derrick goes up in the river, and we watch the impact of this monster of civilization on the primitive mind of the boy. Oil is found but the gusher blows and for a time all is chaos. Eventually it is got under control with the assistance of the magic charms of the boy and the science of the engineers, and the derrick departs, leaving the boy and the land as they were before, except that the boy now has a gun of his own.

Strange Victory (68 minutes). Brilliantly edited and with a telling commentary, this film is unfortunately marred by excessive length and repetition. The first part is a compilation of library material which reminds us of what we went through during the war years, and traces the rise of the Nazi party and its race theories. From this it passes to an indictment of the antinegro and anti-semitic tendencies growing in the United States, and stresses their dangers. The Quiet One (70 minutes). This moving film deals with the psychiatric treatment of delinquent children from the slums of New York. For its theme the film reconstructs the life of a small negro boy, poor, backward, starved of love, and hating the home in which he lives alone with his grandmother. Gradually he drifts aimlessly into crime and is taken to a special school. Here we see how the staff with endless patience slowly coax him back to a more normal attitude to life.

The School that Learned to Eat (22 minutes). This film shows how one of the backward schools in the Southern States of America improved its standard of diet and feeding arrangements by means of co-operation between the children and their parents, resulting in better health and happiness both for the children and the community as a whole.

Two Chinese Dances (11 minutes) Two examples of Chinese dancing, demonstrated by

a Chinese-American.

### UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

A Day in the Life of the USSR (75 minutes). This is an omnibus compilation shot by fifty cameramen showing scenes and events in the many different parts of the country on a single day in 1947.

Springtime in the Mountains (11 minutes). A picture of the beautiful scenery in Caucasia. The Vain Bear (12 minutes). A delightful cartoon about a bear, who, dissatisfied with his appearance, acquired a peacock's tail. The result is a disaster for him, and he is only rescued from hunters by the joint efforts of his friends.

White Gold (11 minutes). An interesting combination of cartoon and actuality to illustrate the uses and importance of cotton in the economy of the USSR.

### YUGOSLAVIA

Children's Welfare (11 minutes). This is an instructional film dealing with the care of children in the nursery schools of Yugoslavia.

Slavitza (100 minutes). This is a feature film which tells a story of the fight against Fascism in Yugoslavia during the war. The heroes and heroines are the workers of the village, who rise against their capitalist oppressors. These are assisted first by the Italians and then by the Germans. Eventually the villagers are obliged to take to the hills, where they join the Partisans. After many adventures the war is won under the leadership of Tito, and they return with depleted ranks in triumph to their village.

# An Exhibition about Documentary Films?

(Continued from page 99)

asked whether it could be made available for showing. In addition, George Toeplitz of Poland, the secretary of the World Union of Documentary, saw it during a visit here and also wanted a copy for exhibition purposes in his own country, But the exhibition, successful as it was at Edinburgh, has only scratched the surface of the problem. Once again documentary has spoken only to the limited few. But it has proved one thing—that the proposed exhibition about documentary was no unworkable airy-fairy scheme. Part of it has been made to work, and made to work in the span of a few weeks and with practically no money. The need for an exhibition about documentary films for the man and women in the street is as strong as ever. The knowledge is there; the enthusiasm is there; but where is the money?

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Once again the society has had to change its meeting place, this year the show will be held at the Royal Empire Society on week-day evenings. The eleventh season opens on November 11 when the show will consist mainly of medical films, including the Canadian Feeling of Hostility and the new COI film Polio Diagnosis and Management.

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# The Critics

# on the Steps

★ "WAVERLEY STEPS" does in part for Edinburgh what "RHYTHM OF A CITY", "BERLIN" and "MENSCHEN AM SONNTAG" did for Stockholm and Berlin, and what no film has done for any other British city....

To convey all this without a commentary by nuance and suggestion to one who, like myself, has never seen the City of Edinburgh is the signal achievement of "WAVERLEY STEPS"—a crisp, rhythmic film with brain and wit behind it....

This half-hour film, of which I shall write again when it is released, has, in fact, found something that should be pursued and developed.'

RICHARD WINNINGTON
News Chronicle, August 23, 1948

★ 'By far the best of the three new films . . . . . is "WAVERLEY STEPS". Here something very much like genius is displayed by director, cameraman and editor in combination—respectively John Eldridge, Martin Curtis and John Trumper. The Central Office of Information produced it for the Scottish Home Department, and if all official patronage were to be like this there would be no grumbling. For Eldridge has plainly been allowed to reproduce his own impression of Edinburgh—and no nonsense about susceptibilities. Black and white here, misty there, sometimes squalid, often touching and nearly always amusing. It is the Edinburgh of life, not that of the guidebook.'

'CRITIC'S NOTE'
Manchester Guardian, August 31, 1948

We would like to thank the Central Office of Information for giving us the opportunity to make this film

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NOV-DEC 1948

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# DOCUMENTARY film news

VOL. 7 NO. 70 NOV-DEC 1948

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The cover still is from Rossellini's *Paisa*Printed by permission of Film Traders Corporation

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It was stirred up with very great care boys, When the world and his wife were abed. Now it's hot and ready to serve boys To the visually underfed.

All thanks to a committee or two boys Planning away in a room; We now have a solid foundation boys For the start of a wonderful boom.

So here's to the best of both worlds boys, The future is rosy pink. We've nothing to lose but ourselves boys, For we've not had much time to think.

For the pic is as high as the skies boys And there's room for us all inside. And so long as you don't lift the lid boys You won't know who's taking the ride.

To found a committee is one thing boys To commit a foundation's worse, So don't get rash ideas in your heads boys About stinging the public purse.

And to think it has all been prepared boys, In the name of the kids at school. Won't it give you a great big thrill boys, To make a new teaching tool?

But you've got to remember its name boys, Take care not to call it a spade, It's God's gift to this generation boys, The wonderful visual aid.

# The Sociological Implications of the Film in Colonial Areas

by

# DR K. L. LITTLE

1 SHALL limit myself to an examination of the general sociological implications of film as applied to colonial audiences, relating my points particularly to the areas of West Africa with which I am most familiar, namely the Protectorate of Sierra Leone and the Gambia. What is the relation of film content to society? We always assume that the film has an influence on society, upon customs and upon morals. My impression is that, scientifically, we know very little about this matter. Such scientific work on the sociological influence of film as has been carried out has not borne very impressive results. Cinema is merely one of the many cultural media operating in society. Possibly film content tends to recapitulate social trends and tastes rather than to initiate them or to set them in motion. It may, of course, be true that film helps to form some minor habits.

Film works with established stereotypes, with ideas which are current. It uses stereotypes which are already familiar and helps to imprint them more strongly on the popular mind. Film strengthens existing social attitudes (cf the work of American sociologists). It is important, however, to realize that the film and the cinema possess institutional significance as part of the general life of society. Cinema in Europe and America has reached a stage of development, which also contains a strong element of 'cultism', as exemplified in the adoration of popular 'stars'. This is not yet so in Africa and other tropical territories.

In colonial areas, I think it is necessary to conceive of film on two distinct but interrelated planes-i.e. that of entertainment and that of education. The function of film in either case is to make African or other indigenous peoples socially conscious of themselves in a changing world. African society is now changing with extraordinary rapidity, and in consequence there are many individuals in a 'marginal' position between the African and the Western world. They have a foot in either society and an uncertain insecure position in both. There is a constant pull between the two, a constant conflict, entailing for the individual great difficulty of personal adjustment. Here is one important function of the film. It should be a means of assisting people to adjust themselves to their changing environment and society. But to accomplish this, the film must present material and lines of action in a meaningful context. It will be most effective if it is designed in terms of the characteristics of the indigenous culture. For example, the film could be used as a story-telling medium, a type of medium which is familiar to African culture, and one which traditionally is one of the main forms of instruction and entertainment. Application of this story-telling method will help to attain successful results, particularly if the narrative technique used starts from a background of familiar events and happenings. Such a technique will enable new ideas to be introduced into a context which is already known and understood. To make films for Africa it is vital, as far as possible, to think in terms of African culture, to understand and, if possible, to use African symbolism. To my mind the basic need for the effective production of films for Africa is that film-makers undergo a thorough anthropological training and should study deeply the African culture, particularly from the angle of linguistics and formal symbolism. Failing that ideal preparation for film-making for Africa, might I suggest a number of themes, a number of lines of action which are likely to be effective, to attract the African, and which could be exploited in the production of films.

The first is litigation and court procedure. This should provide the kind of dramatic situation which would be generally understood and immediately significant to any African audience.

Secondly, films dealing with traditional scenes and events are likely to be successful. In every African community the sense of history, of tradition, is very strong. Particularly among the illiterate people there is a very intense sense of continuity with the past, which largely takes the form of stories about the deeds of predecessors and forebears—stories which are absolutely lifelike and vivid to the audience.

Films with simple themes, the jealous wife, the thief, bargaining at market, etc., would be equally meaningful. One must remember that one is dealing with folk forms which are indigenous as well as innately dramatic. A parallel may be found in the Irish plays of Lady Gregory. This applies to the rural areas: in the 'urbanized' districts, films of a more sophisticated type will be necessary.

Another form which might well be used is that of the return of the ex-Servicemen, which could be used for description of life abroad. It is not uncommon in Africa to see ex-Servicemen in a market-place or on the verandah or a friend's house, recounting tales of their adventures and describing the sights they have seen overseas.

With regard to the more specifically educational film, some suggestions are as follows:

Films could usefully be made showing the wide ramifications of the native production of cash crops, like cocoa, as part of world economy. This could be made in the form of a narrative of the whole proces of production, exchange in trade, followed by the processing and preparation of the manufactured product, its distribution, and consumption in a European home. This could equally be done for manufactured goods for which native products are exchanged, as with cloth, eotton goods. etc., Such a type of film might help in introducing a sense of belonging to a world community and in breaking down the state of affairs in which many people barely move beyond the village horizon, both geographically and psychologically.

With regard to technique in film-making for rural Africa: a non-sophisticated technique is necessary. Any symbolism that is employed must be indigenous to the culture of the people concerned.

To sum up briefly some of the important points on the subject of film-making. For success, the cinema should fill the place of an institution-like that of the story-teller-with which the people are familiar. A narrative sequence should give the best results. Production should be in the vernacular for specific purposes, and the participation on all levels of African personnel is desirable, particularly if they have a knowledge of and pride in their own culture. The use of the folk idiom is necessary, whenever possible. Incidentally, filmmakers should remember that music can be very important, especially drumming, in respect of its symbolical as well as entertainment value, while satirical themes acted by Africans are likely to be successful.

(Dr K. L. Little is a lecturer in social anthropology at the London School of Economies. This address was given to a meeting of the International Committee of the Scientific Film Association on September 20, 1948. The Scientific Film Association, in co-operation with British Documentary, has established a permanent committee for the study of the Film in Mass Education and Colonial Development, and for the collection and distribution of information on the subject.)

# Rossellini and Us: Paisa

by

# PETER BRINSON

'NO MAN,' wrote Caudwell in Illusion and Reality, 'can look directly at himself, but art makes of the Universe a mirror in which we catch glimpses of ourselves, not as we are, but as we are in active potentiality of becoming in relation to reality through society. . . . The more we grip external reality, the more our art develops and grows increasingly subtle. . . . Art tells us what science cannot tell us, and what religion only feigns to tell us-what we are and why we are, why we hope and suffer and love and die. It does not tell us this in the language of science, as theology and dogma attempt to do, but in the only language that can express these truths, the language of inner reality itself, the language of affect and emotion.'

It is our criticism of Rossellini that in Paisa, whilst taking hold of 'external reality' he yet does not tell clearly enough in the 'language of inner reality itself' the story which he has to unfold; he does not truthfully enough express the underlying significance of the events with which he deals and the relationship of his characters to those events. Paisa is the work of a master; it is not, what some of the critics would have us believe, the work of a genius.

We acknowledge the grandeur of its composition and the sympathy which touches every character, a sympathy in step with the time. These were the days of Liberation and the defeat of fascism, when America still meant for the peoples of the world the progressive policies of Roosevelt. There moved then 'A spirit abroad in Europe which is finer and braver than anything that tired continent has known for centuries, and which cannot be withstood,' The future of Italy, and of Europe too, rested then and remains with the little thief, with Carmela below the cliff, with Cigolani whom the Nazis hanged and with his friends whom they murdered. Paisa is a noble monument to them. Yet the inscription thereon lacks the note of hope, of faith ir the future, which is here the inner reality of the story. The dominant theme is of horror and destruction. The great truth of the triumph of the poor, the masses themselves, over Nazism and all that it means, this is concealed. We suspect that in treating his subject thus, Rossellini has allowed himself to overlook a famous dictum of Engels which no artist should forget: 'the more the author's views are concealed the better for the work of art'. We suspect this now all the more when the note of gloom has deepened, reaching its apotheosis in Germany Year Zero.

But in assessing the works of Rossellini available in this country, and in comparing these works with productions over here, it is important to bear in mind both the dates when the films were made and the character of the events with which they deal. To bear in mind these dates is to draw the conclusion that a comparison between Rossellini's work and British documentary production only becomes significant if British war productions are included. Nothing produced in this country since the war can compare either with our own war productions or with Open City and Paisa, and to what extent Rossellini is succeeding with more contemporary themes where British producers are failing can alone be judged when his latest picture is completed.

However, the appearance of *Paisa* at this juncture does underline both the advantages which Italian documentary producers enjoy over producers in this country, in spite of the incomparably greater pressure of the dollar against Italian economic independence, and the stagnation of British documentary itself. It may be, as one reviewer believes, that force of circumstances in part accounts for the 'new realism' of the Italian cinema, 'They have had to improvise and use their ingenuity as never before,' wrote Miss Cullen, 'in order to overcome the lack of studio space, new photographic equipment and a shortage of electricity for their arc lamps. They have taken their cameras out into the streets of the cities, and into the fields of the countryside; they have used non-professional actors and actresses, and stiuations for their scripts that they have experienced themselves,' But we need to remember also that Italian legislation gives documentary film production an encouragement and a protection still lacking over here. Not only does the law of April 8, 1948, recognize that the protection and development of Italian cinematography is the task of the Government, it lays down important regulations with regard to Italian production, which can be summarized as follows:

- '(a) The producer of an Italian film of over 2,000 metres length, the first performance of which takes place before December 31, 1949, shall receive a grant of 10 per cent of the gross receipts for a period of four years from the date of its first performance.
- (b) A further grant of 6 per cent on the above-mentioned takings and for the same period will be made, by way of premium, to films which the Technical Commission of the

Film Division recognizes as being of cultural and artistic value.

- (c) In the case of Italian documentary films a grant of 3 per cent of the gross receipts is made within the same time limits, but only to films which have been recognized as meritorious by the Technical Commission.
- (d) Producers of Italian newsreels of over 150 metres length shall receive a grant equivalent to 2 per cent of the gross receipts from performances at which those films are shown for a period of six months from the first public performance.
- (e) A fund, equivalent to I per cent of the gross receipts of Italian films has been established for the purpose of financing the artistic and cultural development of the Italian film and the exchange of films with foreign countries
- (f) The quota for the obligatory showing of national films is 80 days per year.
- (g) The programme of each performance must include the showing of at least one short film (documentary or newsreel) of national production.
- (h) The State Treasury's contribution to the National Labour Bank's autonomous Section for Film Credits is authorized to give credits up to 60 per cent of production costs.'

The differences between Italian and British legislation do not, of course, alone account for the present state of British documentary. Paisa's appearance in this country, together with the praises lavished upon it by nearly every critic serve to throw into relief the absence here in recent works of any comparable inspiration and technical virtuosity. The warmth of this welcome is well merited by Rossellini's mastery of his medium, but its almost totally unqualified nature, in spite of the fact that the film falls short in some degree from what would have been the most sincere and, in the artistic sense, the most truthful interpretation of the subject, is the measure not only of the absence of comparable recent works of our own but of the urgent need to consider the whole orientation of British documentary today, the direction of its movement, its role and obligations, of the need, in short, for documentary as an art to reconsider its approach to external reality and to speak in clearer terms 'the language of inner reality itself, the language of affect and emotion'

Report of the Commission on Technical Needs, Press, Radio and Film. p. 237. UNI'SCO, Paris 1948

# One Dog-Two Trees

# WHO SAYS EXPERIMENTAL FILM? by Jørgen Roos

Documentary today is as big as a house . . . JOHN GRIERSON

Well, indeed there is something wrong with documentary films. We have heard it from the audience, we can see it in the films, and it appears from the current discussion among film-men.

Just as there was reason to laud the production basis created for the fighting documentary film by Grierson, Cavalcanti and other pioneers—there may be reason today to stop for just a moment and ask: 'Well, why then have we built this house?'

1. Is it to be the place where the vanguard of the world's film creators is striving to achieve new possibilities of expression, and sharpen and develop their artistic weapons for creations of unknown dimensions?

Or

2. Are we to get together a staff of helpful men giving their social services to a robot organization, watching their energy and youth being wasted on the platform, which was erected by Grierson, and which fits into the plans for all existing authorities in all countries, irrespective of political opinion?

We recognize in point 2 the way things are today.

But we want point 1 instead.

When Len Lye came to his boss in the GPO and said, 'I want to make a film without a camera,' Cavalcanti answered: 'Well, we haven't very much to lose—go ahead.' We all know the scope of this conversation and must admit that this was an attitude from a producer, which we need today. If documentary film in its future life will yield a couple of rooms in its house to experimenting film art, maybe even support it by virtue of its position of production—then there is every reason to believe that documentary film will not go on being a term of abuse.

In Denmark documentary filmhas absorbed all the film-men who are not working in the commercial production. As documentary film is mainly financed by the State, this means that in our production we have no free film creators. Only the artists and engineers who are able to subordinate their intentions to a propagandistic or educational tendency can be certain of a continued production.

But a few privately produced films have proved that there is a wish to make film an individual branch of art. It is all in an embryo state, and it is impossible to refer to a development beset with tradition. As a matter of

About a year ago Dansk Filmforbund (Danish Film Association—the Danish documentary film organization) started a spirited, critical and informative paper-DF Bulletin. The tenth number of Volume 2 was an international issue, and printed in English. It was reviewed in our last issue. It contained an article by a wellknown Danish documentary worker, Jorgen Roos, headed Who savs Experimental Film? Arthur Elton wrote a reply, translated into Danish, under the title Hus Forbi (Barking Up the Wrong Tree), and published in the November issue of DF Bulletin-by whose courtesy the two articles are here reprinted. Almost all the Danish films mentioned are listed and synopsized in Documentary in Denmark—the English edition of the Danish Government film catalogue.

fact, it is still a question about few films only, but considering the interest, which especially the young film-men but also the finance authorities have shown towards these small works—then there is hope for a development in the desired direction.

In the first experimental film The Escape\* Albert Mertz and I tried to free ourselves of a stagnated documentary style and find freer forms of expression. In the subsequent The Heart Thief, which was financed by a group of abstract painters, we went still farther and told a completely improbable story in a naturalistic milieu. Richard Winther, a young painter, last year produced his first film Triple Boogie which was the first abstract film in this country. This year, Søren Melson, a well-known director of documentary films, has produced The Tear painted direct on the film strip. Our latest production is Opus 1 which I have scratched direct into the black film, picture by picture, and which is accompanied by a New Orleans march.

I shall leave the judgment of these films in the hands of a more competent and qualified jury, but I think I have the approval of my friends in stating that these small experimental films have been a greater satisfaction to us than a long series of documentary films. We are working in the production of documentary films and want to support it to as wide an extent as possible, as we think that it will be possible to find a production basis which will support the experiments to a higher degree than is the case at present.

\*Documentary in Denmark, No. 19, 1942.

This is a cogent necessity, not only for the notion of documentary film, but for film art as a whole. The documentalists often use their acquired abilities as a spring-board into commercial production. The reason for this must also be sought in the much too uniform arrangement and the resulting limited possibilities of personal formulation.

Let us have a reform in the production conditions, give the film artists the freedom which is necessary, and which will make the house that is built for film as a means of education a centre for film as an art.

It is the film-men who want this. Who says experimental films? We do!

# BARKING UP THE WRONG TREE by Arthur Elton

By making the tenth issue of the *Dansk* Filmforbund Bulletin international, with authoritative articles on Danish documentary and film legislation, the Danish film movement has made yet another contribution to international understanding. I hope the paper will be ready everywhere. I am sure it will be admired—and envied. Papers owned and produced independently by documentary are still all too rare. Since the international number of the Bulletin has given some space to the battle between the old aesthetic and the new, I hope I may be allowed to loose off some shells at my friend, Jørgen Roos, and to reserve a salvo or so for his brother, Karl.<sup>1</sup>

Firstly, let me tell what the battle is about. On one side is the sanctity-of-personal-expression school, bumbling, bombazined and sometimes more than a little bad tempered, with its feet in the mud and its back to the future. From his article Who says 'Experimental Film'? I think Jørgen Roos must be a Captain or even a Colonel of this school, with Karl Roos as a Sergeant Major. On the other side is the realist or documentary school, drawing its strength and inspiration from the patterns of everyday life. Among its leaders are Skot-Hansen and half a score of Danish film artists.

The Roos school sighs and says, if only society or the government or Dansk Kultur-film would give us money and equipment and time, without either directive or control, we would turn out some real film art which would make everyone sit up and hold their hats on. Only give us freedom (which is their way of saying cash), they cry, and we will spin films out of our souls or stomachs or what-have-you's which will show everyone What's What. Jørgen dislikes official sponsorship because

he says it kills art and means that one is serving 'a robot organization'. Karl seems equally upset that two Danish documentary directors, including Bjarne Henning-Jenson<sup>2</sup> have decided to make commercial features, in spite of the fact that many of us find their commercial work powerful, striking and sincere. If the Roos school has its way and compels the film artists to deprive themselves of both official and commercial sponsorship, all that may be left for them to do is what a malicious critic said Swinburne did-that is, to sit in their own excrement and add to it. What the Roos school wants, in common with American big business and reactionaries all over the world, is freedom to use resources without control, privilege without reponsibility, and suckers for

The films of the documentary school, from Night Mail to A Matter of your Freedom, have their origins in the realities of the outside world. Their raw material is life. They gain both their motive power and their drama from the reciprocal pressures always to be found between people and their social, political and governmental organizations. It is therefore not only right, but inevitable that documentary looks to government for its finances, and has a very deep interest in seeing that its films meet the wants of the public whose needs have called them into existence.

The documentary school finds beauty in an appeal to the mind no less than to the senses. The very clarity of good exposition is a pleasurable quality in itself. For this reason, documentary has developed an aesthetic to contain at once Hydraulics and Listen to Britain, Chants Populaires and We are the Railways. The range of documentary is as wide as literature itself. Within it, you will find the simple teaching film, the advanced scientific film report and the lyrical film poem. It is worth remembering that what Theodor Christensen calls the 'alldominating British information film' embraces Lord Siva Danced, Steps of the Ballet, Waverley Steps, Three Dawns to Sydney and Four Voices of Malay—to mention only five notable British films released since last Christmas.

The Roos school wants to make the film 'an individual branch of art'. For them, film experiment is a method of finding a 'freer form of expression'. They seem more concerned with how to express themselves than with that they say. On one of the rare occasions when a government seems to have given a completely free hand to private \* inspiration, the result was Pan and the Girl<sup>3</sup> a film which has taken a deal of living down, and one which is greatly inferior to the same director's The Corn is in Danger4 which has its roots firmly in agricultural propaganda. For the documentary school, almost every film, from Colour Box to The Corn is in Danger, and from The Film of Denmark<sup>5</sup> to The Feeling of Hostility, is an experiment.

For each subject presents new problems in shaping and expressing material so that it may be comprehended, not only intellectually, but also with all the feeling that a work of art can evoke.

If the documentary school can call up a whole host of notable and experimental films in its support, the Roos school is oddly shy of naming films. They prefer to find their support in personal witnesses rather than film titles. Having excommunicated Grierson as a deviator, or even a destroyer of true film art, they rely on Cavalcanti, Winifred Holmes, Len Lye, Irmgard Schemke and 'the bulk of cinemagoers'. I do not know the views of Irmgard Schemke, I do know that the Roos school have no idea at all what the bulk of cinemagoers think, feel or say. They must have introduced the cinemagoers as a bluff in the hopes that no one would call it. I do know the work of Cavalcanti, Winifred Holmes and Len Lye.

Cavalcanti made his living in France by making commercial features, and his name by making Rien que les Heures and the charming, sensitive, gay but unimportant En Rade. Grierson hired him in the middle thirties to help with the GPO film unit. His technical virtuosity is great, and everyone profited and is grateful for his skill as a craftsman, critic and teacher. Almost his only personal expedition into film making at this time, the comedy Pett and Pott, was a failure. He then worked in a general way on many films, and his contributions to the sound tracks of Night Mail and Coal Face were notable. He stayed on with the GPO film unit after Grierson had left, and was the producer of a number of excellent films, including two of the first wartime documentaries, The First Days and Men of the Lightship. Towards the end of his time with the government film unit he seemed to become disgruntled. In 1940, he left documentary for what I suppose he hoped would be the greater and more invigorating freedoms of the studios. Since then, most of his commercial films, if sensitive and tasteful, have been commonplace. Cavalcanti's most significant contributions to the art of the film have undoubtedly been made within the framework of British government sponsorship. At his best, he was a solver of problems in bringing alive the public services on the screen.

Though I do not wish to pooh-pooh Winifred Holmes as a film critic, I am prepared for the Roos school to have her.

Finally, Len Lye, Jørgen Roos is really cheating by introducing him at all. Lye is a New Zealander—a schoolmaster and an artist. He came to London in the early thirties with Jack Ellit, a New Zealand musician and expert on jazz. Together they made *Tusilava*, an abstract film which few people saw, and fewer remember. Except for a puppet film which has never finished, *Tusilava* was Len Lye's only expedition into self-expression for its own sake. *Tusilava* 

had no point because it had no purpose. However, it is probable that Lye's later and more creative film work had its origin here. *Tusilaya* must have been the first film ever to be made by drawing directly on the celluloid.

It was not till Len Lye had an opportunity to use his great talents for public information that he made films of real experimental or artistic value. Colour Box and Rainbow Dance were both propaganda films for the GPO Savings Bank, and Trade Tattoo for inter-dominion trade. Should Jørgen Roos argue that these films prove his case, because their content is divorced from the aims of their sponsors, he must think again. All three get their inspiration directly from their subject matter. The Jørgen Roos fantasy of how Colour Box came to be made must be skotched, too. He says: 'When Lye came to his boss in the GPO and said: "I want to make a film without a camera", Cavalcanti answered: "Well, we haven't very much to lose—go ahead."' First of all, Grierson was Len Lye's boss, and not Cavalcanti. Secondly it was only by an effort that Grierson was able to mould both the inflexibilities of the Savings Bank, and Len Lye's artistic aspirations, so that each side could contribute to the joint affair which culminated in Colour Box.

Len Lye's early films came straight out of the public service. If you would follow his influence and see where it has taken root. you will have to go to Ottawa, where it is flourishing under the benevolent but also careful sponsorship of the National Film Board of Canada. The splendid and imaginative works of Norman Mac-Caren and his colleagues are at once major contributions to the art of the cinema, and ten thousand miles away from the preciosities of the Roos school. When the film history of the last twenty-five years comes to be written, I am afraid that Jørgen Roos's The Escape is likely to be dismissed as pastiche. The historian will surely look for the aesthetic, creative and dramatic roots of Danish documentary in such works as The Film of Denmark, Motherhelp Sugar, People in a House, The Corn is in Danger, A Matter of Your Freedom, Cutter H.71, Potatoes, Generator Gas, Pay Your Taxes Gladly and The  $Toad^6$ .

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Karl Roos. Poet and documentary seriptwriter, Wrote the poetic commentary for A Matter of Your Freedom (1946), the record of the Danish underground movement. Reviewed by Winifred Holmes in Sight and Sound, Vol. 15, No. 60, 1948. In another article he regrets that two able Danish documentary directors 'now direct practically only commercine films'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Director of Ditte—Child of the People, and Those Dratted Kids, both seen privately in London and Edinburgh.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Doeumentary in Denmark, No. 61, 1945.

<sup>4</sup> Doeumentary in Denmark, No. 59, 1944

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Doeumentary in Denmark, No. 1, 1935. <sup>6</sup> Respectively Documentary in Denmark,

Nos. 1; 25; 28; 40; 59; -; 47; 52; 56; 68; 62.

# Ten Minutes That Shook Me Rigid

by

# .JOHN TRUMPER

'THIS IS regarded by the highest authorities as revolutionary screen treatment ranking with the introduction of the close-up, the camera boom and sound.' Thus the publicity blurb. An alternative, I gather, presumably intended for an illiterate arc of the Critics' Circle, was simply a length of cord; a gag, after all, far more compatible and in scale with the advertised article than the pompous nonsense quoted above. For the story that *Rope* tells and the idiom of its telling are inseparable, the one as freakish as the other, and furthermore the difference between its idiom and that of any other story-telling film is one merely of degree, not of kind.

'Thou shalt not kill.' The fact that the censor felt himself constrained to make this platitudinous statement of faith before the main title, and also to excise the original opening in which murder most foul is committed before our very eyes, illustrates both the strength and the weakness of the original story. Its strength, of course, lies in its strict unity both of time and of place, a unity that is both a technical tour de force and also a very tangible element in the creation of convincing naturalism and suspense. But against this strength we must set an almost equivalent weakness, that of abnormal and occasionally unreal characterization. Can we really care less whether these two effete young homosexuals, priggish and neurotic as they are respectively made to appear, meet their merited doom in Reel 2 or in Reel 20? Despite the unusual urgency given to the story by its two unities, we can only watch the development of situation plot would be too strong a word—and the clash of character with the same kind of cold and detached excitement with which we would follow an expert game of chess.

In his film treatment, Hitchcock has done all in his power to retain the strength of the original story, but its weakness has been increased rather than lessened by the softening of eccentricities of character, eccentricities without which the interplay of action and reaction seems to have no convincing starting-point. The weakness has merely been shifted from freakish characterization to arbitrary and imposed behaviour.

As the strength of the story, its unity of time and place, is retained by a deliberate abhorrence of visual interruption and consequently by rejection of the infinitely variable rhythms and scansions associated with film-editing, in favour of a

uniform flow of visual prose, far more responsibility than usual rests with the actors, especially as their actions must still remain convincing within a framework of character whose corners have been carefully rounded by the scriptwriter. And it is here that Rope, as a film, succeeds brilliantly. The cast, with one exception, bless her, give us acting whose subleties of emphasis and timing are precious little in evidence on the London stage and whose qualities of speed and urgency must be held up as an example to those who managed to make The Small Voice, despite its advantage of a more normal editing scheme, the monotonous charade it was. If I had to single out a name to praise above the others, it would be Farley Granger's pathetic study of neurotic and conscience-stricken misery: his tardy and ineffective rebellion against the hypnotic arrogance of his partner is one of the few really moving things in the film.

Without the infinitely variable rhythms of editing, too, the visual tempo relies largely upon camera-movement. Apart from the same kind of premonitory wobble that made us exclaim during Hamlet, 'Here comes a crane shot,' these movements are well-selected and succeed in assembling an astonishing variety of significant set-ups within the limits of each reel. It's worthy of mention, though, that the most effective moment in the film finds the camera, for once, motionless while we wait in mounting suspense for Mrs Wilson to open the chest. The changing colours of the New York background give the story, with the nominal assistance of Natalie Kalmus, a perspective which Lifeboat totally missed and, towards the end, a melodramatic accompaniment which made music unnecessary. This background only betrayed its artificiality when we tracked towards or away from the window and the supposedly distant skyscrapers became larger or smaller with the objects in the room.

Don't imagine from all this that there was a mere routine job for the editor. Apart from his work on the original script, the sound track was his to make or mar. The brilliance of the sound at the end of the story is obvious enough, but less obvious is the handling of off-screen dialogue and the dramatic use of silence. One small piece of sound will illustrate its integral part in the film: the police-siren which is heard distantly when Rupert is first questioning Phillip and which foreshadows the banshee wail that draws its hideous curtain over the final climax. Some-

thing, I feel, more sinister and morbid could have been chosen as the often repeated piano piecthan that jolly little Poulenc *Mouvement Per* petuel.

There remains, in this survey of the film's resources, the purely physical problem of reelchanges, and it must be stated in all fairness that this problem remains unsolved. Three times we are asked to admire, intensely but irrelevantly, the midnight-blue of someone's back and the little green dot that hops on to it and off again just below the right shoulder. There are, besides, four very ordinary cuts, from observer to observed, from speech to reaction, from offscreen speech to speaker and from question to answer. The final reel-change, where Rupert, in opening the chest and discovering the body, blacks out the screen, would have been dramatic indeed but for the fact that the darkness reminded us irresistibly of our previous back-scratching explorations.

This unsolved problem of reel-changes suggests that the ideal medium for a story like *Rope* is television, where a mobile camera can grind away to its heart's content and where the normal film practice of rhythmic visual interruption and punctuation is impossible in any case. The problems of adequate rehearsal, however, are probably insurmountable. We can only wait and see.

It's sheer madness to insist, as many wellmeaning critics have done, that the film represents a serious menace to the future of creative editing. The story it tells has been handled in the only compatible way, but because its idiom would be not only unsuited to, but unneeded by, any story without the same two strict unities, that alone is enough to show how freakish and inimitable Rope must remain. It's new and unusual, ves: but then, so is a well-respected film-technician's concerto for sackbut, virginals and three lavatory-chains. We go on writing music. But even if Rope had been less than the small-scale imperfectly-realized tour de force that it is, we must admit that Hitchcock's instinctive enthusiasm for experiment and his delight in his craft are such that we can forgive him even his total failures. No doubt his genius for shock tactics, for the sudden image and the unexpected word, will soon reassert itself after this brief period of strenuous self-denial.

# The Peaceful Years

The Peaceful Years. Pathé Documentary Unit. Producer: Peter Baylis. Commentator: Emlyn Williams. Drawings: Joy Thomas. Music: Hal Evans

Few people would take a contemporary history book out of a local library to read for pleasure, but *The Peaceful Years*, which is, after all, history with the skin rubbed off, will draw people to the cinema on its own account. Here is a new experience for most of us: a chance to see something of the pattern of history, the pitting repetitions in man's behaviour and affairs, and so to gain a perspective about events usually too difficult to attain when we are living in the middle of them.

Peter Baylis and his team have carved from newsreels of the period and other sources visual records of some of the main events of those fateful twenty years, 1919-39. They have tried to give a balanced review covering activities in every field where the film camera has penetrated—and it has managed to get into some murky corners. That they have succeeded in making a film which will be vitally interesting to students of social behaviour as well as to the poor sap whose behaviour is being studied is no little compliment to their disarming selection of material. The subjects range from battles to bathing belles, from the songs of 'Hutch' to the voice of Roosevelt.

It is admittedly a journalist's history, made up of the kind of matter that would anyway have got on to the front page, but that is no flaw in a film which succeeds in being both a thunderingly good piece of entertainment and a stark object lesson. For here in just over an hour's run is all the folly of man's conduct of affairs over those twenty vital years.

This film follows the earlier review of one year, Scrapbook for 1922, made as a venture by Pathé. That film was very well worth-while because of the historical comparison it afforded with the post-war situation of 1947, twenty-five years later. The sobering effect of seeing the kind of things happening then on a far larger scale than they are occurring today could not but help to make people see the present-day difficulties in a better perspective—and any film which can do that at the same time as making people laugh is the most valuable addition to a cinema programme. In The Peaceful Years there is not this easily discerned parallel, because they cover the whole of the inter-Great Wars period; consequently there is nothing so clear-cut. But this film is going to make people look a little more deeply into their daily news and wonder if we haven't already started another twenty years' march to some other bigger catastrophe. To set people thinking is unusual enough for a film in an ordinary cinema programme: to do so without grinding an axe, and with real humour and wit is an even rarer achievement.

mentary sums up or makes a general statement. Although the later drawings are the least successful, the first one, and the use made of it, certainly adds something to the film: it convinces that there is an idea of presentation here which is worth pursuing even if in this case it has not



The technique of presenting the visual material has been developed since the earlier film. Emlyn Williams gives a pleasant and unaffected introduction to it, as well as speaking the linking commentary. But the body of comment is carried by character voices which display some special interest or point of view that often gives an intriguing twist to the subject matter. An hour glass, with its sands on the run, and drawings are used (with perhaps a little too unfailing a regularity) as devices to link the main sequences. The use of symbolic drawings is an interesting attempt to get over the appalling difficulty, common to all films conveying ideas, of finding something to put on the screen while the com-

reached its best realization. Music, too, has been used intelligently and humorously, often giving point or poignancy to the event on the screen.

There is no doubt that *The Peaceful Years* will have a very wide distribution on its own merits. If anyone wishes to learn the reason for such a desirable prospect for a film, it is to be found in the film's entertainment value. The presentation is lively, simple and, above all, human. Even more important, there is no feeling in the film that its makers were so overburned with an important message to be 'got over' that they couldn't stoop to pick up a bit of fun by the wayside,

#### **Book Reviews**

# A Pioneer Document

# Science in Film Edited by BLODWEN LLOYD Reviewed by JOHN MADDISON

AMONG ACADEMIC scientists, it is rare to find one who has really come to grips with the problems of film in teaching and research. Dr Lloyd, editor of this 'world review and reference book', illustrated with stills, is such a rarity. Her knowledge of the making, distribution and use of scientific films is broad and sympathetic. Happily, too, she has chosen, in editing this book as her Preface implies, to interpret science in a wide 'impure' sense. Uneasy perhaps lest at this point her more austere colleagues may be looking over her shoulder, she tends rather to apologize for including science for the citizen in her area of operation. Reverence for what is called, I think, in another field, the apparatus of scholarship leads her sometimes to write pompously and to bring in the impressive but ill-defined neologism. Some of the contributors also fall into the flat official manner, which plays such odd tricks with language. But these are minor faults in an immensely stimulating and valuable work.

The book is divided into two roughly equal parts; a series of individual essays and an international scientific film directory. The essays are especially valuable because they bring together under one roof, so to speak, a mass of data, hitherto scattered about in many periodicals and reports. In the chapter, 'The Scientific Film Today', after an uncertain start, the editor herself assembles many interesting facts about the teaching film, particularly in America. One of her observations may be underlined:

By the end of 1943, its (the US Government's) War Department had 10,200 training films and 11,890 training 'shorts'. Many of these are now released for use by educational and other establishments. A similar policy in Britain would no doubt release much valuable material for scientific, industrial and technical training.

Roger Shattuck of UNESCO in his essay 'Scientific Films and the Peoples' surveys the international dissemination of scientific knowledge by films. Cataloguing is an important aspect of this traffic in ideas, and we learn that UNESCO is drawing up a list of films designed to popularize science. (This, Shattuck says, should be ready by the end of 1947—a sidelight on the tedious mechanism of book production these days.) Contemplating present UN discontents at the Palais de Chaillot, one can only sadly agree with him that films, dealing popularly with the scientific outlook and method, are urgently needed. Professor George Bell provides in 'Visual Physiology and the Cine-film', a summary, generally speaking authoritative, of our knowledge of such matters as screen brightnesses, and the best manner of placing screens and arranging the seats for classroom projection. In a wider context, he recalls Kleitman's experimental finding that looking at films is by no means a physiological relaxation. In a subject remaining seated for two hours or more, there is an increase in muscle tension, shown according to Kleitman, by a statistically significant rise in body temperature of ½ to 1 degree Fahrenheit. Bell, incidentally and rightly I think, attacks the conservative aestheticism of Rudolf Arnheim who resents by implication the increasing illusion of reality which technical progress brings in the cinema In this part of his discussion, there is strangely enough no mention of the work of Michotte of Louvain.

In his review of British films in medicine in the last ten years, Brian Stanford points to the difficulties and the advantages of medical film-making. With medically untrained actors, slight lapses of behaviour are immediately detected by a critical professional audience. (This isn't, one may add, confined to medical films.) Characteristically and endearingly, Stanford campaigns for a more ordered and functional approach to medical film production. Russell Reynolds, a veteran in the use of cineradiography, describes in detail its techniques and their applications in diagnosis and research.

Two other essays are of great practical value. Denys Parsons writes sensibly on scripting and the sources of information upon which the scientific film maker may draw. Quite outstanding is Derek Stewart's 'Technique and Equipment'. This is a tightly packed, carefully marshalled conspectus of recent advances in the use and manufacture of photographic materials, light sources, lenses and camera and projector mechanisms. The book is worth having for this chapter alone.

It is left to the mathematicians to remind us of what is after all the most important single fact about the cinema. In it, we have a new language of symbols. Those who have listened to Robert Fairthorne rapidly throwing out the darting stimuli of new conceptions will not be surprised that his, though the briefest, is the most original and thought-provoking chapter in the book. Stressing the visual quality of many everyday symbols, Fairthorne remarks quizzically 'Even the arbitrary symbols "?" and "!" look really puzzled and surprised'. At the recent SFA meeting at the Royal Institution, I was struck again by the entrancing visual quality of his and Salt's pre-war films on the differential calculus. In 'Film and Mathematics', I. R. Vesselo analyses these and practically all other available mathematical films. This is a lucid and restrained piece of writing, enjoyable to read.

Customs formalities and the high cost of film merchandise are no doubt great obstacles to the inter-change of scientific films between peoples. But one of the greatest problems is perhaps that there is no easy way of finding out what films are available and where they can be got. The reference section of this book eomes partly to the rescue. For it, Dr Lloyd has taken the whole world as her parish. Over a hundred closely packed pages describe persons and institutions producing and distributing films, give addresses and shrewdly provide answers to exactly the sort of questions likely to be asked. Inevitably there are gaps and false emphases; but fewer than might have been expected. There are, too, some irritating signs of hasty proof-reading. The book is nevertheless a tour de force.

Dr Lloyd undoubtedly took her courage in both hands in assuming the role of the first encyclopaedist of scientific cinema. The risk was worth taking. It was good to see Dr Lloyd as a delegate to the recent international scientific film congress making new contacts, and finding, it may be hoped, new eollaborators. In this work, she deserves the co-operation of scientists and film-makers everywhere.

Science in Film. Published by Samson Low. 15s.

#### INTRODUCTION TO VISUAL AIDS

On December 17, the National Committee for Visual Aids in Education and the newly formed Educational Foundation for Visual Aids-now jointly responsible for promoting the use of the medium in schools-took their bow before the public at the Royal Empire Society. A programme of speeches and films was presented to a large audience representing the educational world, the film industry, and other interested sections. The speakers-Mr Hardman (deputising for the Minister of Education), Alderman Wright Robinson (vice-Chairman of the National Committee), Sir Rolande Wall and Dr Harrison (of the Educational Foundation) under the Chairmanship of Mr H. H. Williams (Chairman of the National Committee)-spoke of the great prospects for visual aids in education now that the new machinery had been established.

Six films were then shown to illustrate the start which the National Committee and the Foundation had made. The films were designed for a variety of different age groups and were all sponsored by the Central Office of Information.

# Friese-Green

Friese-Green: Ray Allister. (Marsland Publications, 1948). 12s. 6d.

FRIESE-GREEN fits straight into the English mythology of science. He is the mad inventor immortalized in ephemeral children's magazines of the late nineteenth century. He borrowed something from Captain Nemo and the other Jules Verne scientist who proposed to shoot the ice cap off the North Pole with a gigantic cannon, but accidentally rubbed the noughts off a calculation on his blackboard and missed. He may have lent something to Professor Challenger, for Conan Doyle and Friese-Green may have been neighbours in Brighton. Friese-Green was an individualist, anarchic, unbusiness-like, vague. To these qualities he added genius, enthusiasm and a disregard of the ordinary conventions of living and love. He helped to make other men's

fortunes. He fell dead at the age of 66 at a joint meeting of the KRS and CEA under the chairmanship of Lord Beaverbrook on May 5, 1921, with only the price of a cinema seat in his pocket. The industry which had coined millions, but had allowed the man who had contributed so much to them to die virtually of starvation, erected a monument by Lutyens, which ran:

WILLIAM FRIESE-GREEN.
THE INVENTOR OF KINEMATOGRAPHY.
HIS GENILS BESTOWED UPON HUMANITY
THE BOON OF COMMERCIAL CINEMATOGRAPHY
OF WHICH HE WAS THE FIRST INVENTOR AND
PATENTEE

Ray Allister's book studies the evidence for priority of invention of the film camera and projector (as opposed to the moving picture), and proves pretty conclusively that the honour belongs to Friese-Green. By 1888 he had recorded a series of consecutive photographs of movement on oily paper. By some time in January 1889, he had managed to make sensitized celluloid. He had also designed a camera and a projector. His first successful film was projected to a passing policeman in January 1889. He filed a provisional specification with the Patent Office on June 21, 1889. The completed specification was accepted on May 10, 1890. With the exception of sprockets, which Friese-Green had temporally abandoned, the principles of his camera were the fundamental ones from which the camera of today has been developed.

In June 1889, Friese-Green wrote to Edison, proposing to associate his camera with Edison's phonograph in order to make talking pictures. The letter was acknowledged by Edison's laboratory, but not by Edison himself. A full description of the camera was requested. Friese-Greene sent it. There was no reply, but Edison patented his film camera, the Kinetoscope, in 1891 in America. The patent was not taken out in England, because it could not claim 'novelty' over Friese-Green's earlier patent. In 1910 Edison made an affidavit he had never seen the Friese-Green letters, yet from 1891 to this day Edison has usually been given the sole credit for the invention. Indeed, Friese-Green muddled away the proceeds of his own work, and Edison's drive, combined with the Lumière projector of 1894, laid the foundations of the film industry. It was the Lumière show at the Polytechnic in 1896 which first awoke the imagination of the

Though Mr Allister's book is readable and authoritative he has managed to conceal good scholarship under an irritating, diffuse and sometimes slipshod style and presentation. He seems to belong to the school that believes invention to be the isolated and unpredictable product of individual genius. Yet most modern historians agree that inventors are sensitive vehicles, expressing and synthesizing the collective scientific experience of their time. Had the author taken this point of view, his book would have been no less readable, but more profound, and Friese-Green might have appeared as an even greater figure. His motives and character might have been easier to understand. Mr Allister interpolates imaginary conversations, which makes his book seem arch and unreal. He says in his foreword: 'This true story is written in a way that I have sometimes thought intolerable in other biographies. It reports conversations at which the author could not possibly have been present. These conversations appear in this book because, as scenes were described to me by members of Friese-Green's family and by his old colleagues and friends, they set themselves in my mind in dialogue.' Hm.

# **PHOTOMICROGRAPHY**

(A Section of Realist Film Unit Ltd.)

Producer: Dorothy Grayson, B.Sc.

9 GREAT CHAPEL STREET, W.I Gerrard 1958

FIRST CATCH YOUR GRUB . . . .

We have had a good deal of experience one way and another, and we would rather deal with small flora and fauna at Wraysbury than at Great Chapel Street. For one thing, they are easier to find in the country and, for processes such as time-lapse photomicrography at high magnification, we like the country peace and quiet and absence of vibration.

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COLOUR and TIME-LAPSE CINEMICROGRAPHY

# New Documentary Films

Productions.

Robinson Charley. Produced by Halas and Batchelor.

Man Alive. Produced by Anglo-Scottish Pictures. Technicians: Leonard Reeve, Jim Davies, Dick Andrews and Julien Canter.

One Man Story. Produced by the Horizon Film Unit Productions. Directed by Max Munden and Dennis Shand. Photographed by Henry Hall. Music by William Alwyn.

THIS recent batch of COI films can perhaps be regarded as a typical selection of the best of 1948. They exhibit the strengths and weaknesses of British Documentary at the present time. This Is Britain is the excellent informative COI magazine. If it has not got quite the verve and pace of Rotha's original Worker and Warfront, which it supersedes, it has a solid, sensible approach to present-day happenings which should make it popular all over the world. The Issue No. 30 starts with a description of a new motor-car, passes on to a description of some ingenious methods of handling heavy loads, and ends up with a runround the open-air exhibition of sculpture in Battersea Park. The fact that the film is due to be released in January, while the

This Is Britain No. 30. Produced by Merlin Film exhibition of sculpture was in August, suggests that the COI should step up its tempo. It is absurd to take four months to bring such a simple item to the screen. Moreover, the magazine is released monthly, which makes it even more difficult to understand why the item was not included in the September or October issue. A maddening feature of this particular reel is that the name of the motor-car in the first item is not mentioned. If the motor-car is worth showing, it is worth identifying. Are we still in the dark ages where, if a Government mentions the name of one motor-car, all the other motor-car manufacturers twitter like a cackle of schoolgirls?

Robinson Charley is one of the latest examples of the new colour cartoons made for theatrical release by Halas and Batchelor. If their technique has not broken much ground unfamiliar to Disney, the reels have a verve and a sprightliness of their own and are usually amusing and goodtempered. This one takes us for a trot round contemporary economic theory. Charley explains that if we want to import, we must export. We lost our overseas investments in the war, if we must have wars, what do we expect? To him, evidently, the war was an exciting expedition into knight-errantry, which we took on for the love of it. And now we must pay for our fun. One cannot help feeling that Charley's attitude is a little strange, and it does not occur to him to explain to us how and why it was that our overseas investments were removed while we were holding the baby for just those people who

Man Alive and One Man Story are two documentaries running along more or less normal lines. Both of them are made for the Foreign Office. They are finely photographed, smoothly directed and well edited. They meet their points clearly and succinctly. Yet one feels that the writers and directors have not done more than attempt a smooth, workmanlike job. They have not felt the subjects. As a consequence, the very efficiency of the films is a little dull. They run smoothly from end to end, and show little variation in pace, and little sense of dramatic climax. Man Alive tries to be humorous, but without much success.

Man Alive deals with safety in factories, and the Safety Inspectors. (Incidentally, surely the directors of Man Alive could have found a better joke than to make the Inspector trip over his own carpet?) The world the film shows us is just a little too easy. We are blandly informed that most progressive employers co-operate. Of course they do. But what about the unprogressive ones? The film implies that we have reached a kind of paradise where lions and lambs, employers and workers, managers and Government inspectors, doss down together in one great, glorious bed of luke-warm self-esteem.

One Man's Story is a sketch of the life of Dr McGonigle, the celebrated medical officer of health for Stockton-on-Tees who, second only to Sir John Boyd Orr, aroused the national conscience on such questions as bad housing and malnutrition. He was a social scientist of great importance and a pioneer. He had an uphill struggle against reaction and complacency. Little or none of this goes into the film. Again, we are shown the world of mutual luke-warm self-esteem. It is characteristic of the film that the only housing problem McGonigle runs across is that of a slum landlord, dependent for a living wholly on the rent of two cottages and his old age pension. He cannot afford repairs and our sympathies are with him. This kind of odious distortion of truth is something which the COI had better avoid in future. In fact, most landlords are not living on old age-pensions and the rent of two cottages. At that time, for every hard-luck case among landlords, there were a score of thousand hardluck cases among tenants. Why not select, then, from the majority? If these two films, expertly handled though they be, are representative of what the Foreign Office (for whom both were made) considers suitable propaganda abroad, the sooner these matters are taken out of Foreign Office hands, the better. The presentation of Britain as a country of luke-warm compromises, complacent reformers, bobbish workers and suffering landlords, is one which can do us no good. If the recent Social Films from Denmark could deal with social problems as yet unsolved, surely such a powerful country as Britain can only gain esteem by being equally frank. A. E.

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# New Canadian Films

SOME MONTHS ago we reviewed in these pages a selection of new films from the National Film Board of Canada. The result of our critical remarks was a lengthy and explosive letter from the pen of Him Who Must Be Obeyed. For when Big Chief Jollyjack waves his stick there is nothing to be done but dive into the nearest slit trench and scream for mercy.

Now, sadder and wiser men, we again take up the pen, the pen, please God, of fairness, peace and understanding, A new batch of films from the same source has arrived, and rather belatedly we say our little piece.

Stanley Jackson has made a little picture called Who Will Teach Your Child? It is not such a little picture, for it runs to four very substantial reels. The first three-quarters or so is a beauty. The idea is to emphasize the importance of the right sort of person taking up teaching as a career, and it is presumably intended for screening not only to trainee teachers and youth organizations, but also to the community in general, for its appeal is certainly directed to those who have children to be taught as well as to those who will do the teaching. Charming studies of children and pleasant, dramatic moments show that a lot of good work has gone into the film, and that Jackson knows what he is talking about. What a pity it is that when the story is apparently over and a pretty fade-out prepares us for the end, a dull elongated anti-climax starts, the significance of which completely escapes us. A contrast is played between the old type of education and the new, but it is scarcely successful and adds nothing to the message of the film. One feels that the boys in Ottawa have the idea that all material must be used somehow and that they haven't yet learned when to

The criticism of over length can easily be applied to many of their productions. Home Town Paper is also a likeable work on the publication of a local newspaper in the Okanagan Valley—or anywhere else for that matter. The gathering of domestic news of the type so vital to a country community, the births and deaths, the public meetings and auctions, is illustrated nicely enough, although to British audiences the theme is a trifle over-obvious. Again one gets the impression that discreet trimming could have made such a great improvement. There, of course, we are possibly falling into the mistake we made last time. Maybe, with more years of documentary behind us, we tend falsely to estimate just how much our audiences can cope with, But Canada should learn just a little more of the horrors of being boring.

There is nothing boring about It's Fun To Sing. A perfect little gem of a picture about the Leslie Bell Girls' Choir, it has everything. So rarely does documentary attempt a film dealing intelligently with music or any of the skills attached to music, and when attempted so rarely do they succeed, that this reel amply makes up for any of the duller moments. It has good film sense, good film technique, and good honest humour. And that is one of the most precious of all jewels in the documentary movie.

It is a bit of a jump to come to Bob Anderson's Feeling of Hostility. It is the psychological film with all the trimmings. The story of a girl's mental problems caused by her unfortunate home life is handled much more smoothly and with much more confidence than the earlier Feeling of Rejection. Although the tempo is leisurely it grips as much as all the schizophrenic montrosities from Hollywood put together. Whether the message of the film would satisfy a psychologist depends, we imagine, upon the psychologist. Certainly Canada deserves great credit for the skilful and orderly handling of a subject which must be immensely difficult.

As usual, the icing on any programme of films from Canada is the latest batch from Norman McLaren and his team of fantasy merchants. His Fiddlededees and Hoppityhops and other flibbertigibets have a brilliance and a zest all their own. McLaren has developed himself into something unique, and all honour is due to Canada for providing him with a niche where he can mix colour and boogywoogy to his heart's content. It is tragic that Britain, which originated so much of Lye and McLaren form of abstract work, cannot now find even a tiny crazy corner for experimentalists to play around in.

The thing which is as impressive as anything else in these new Canadian films is the great advance made in all the technical skills of

filmeraft. It is not so long ago that we in Britain thought that we were the top in this type of film. The documentaries that came here from Canada, or from most other countries for that matter, were to us imitations of a type of movie exclusively our own. Their handling was heavy and laboured, their technique poor But now some of us feel, with a new and not altogether unpleasant sense of humility, that this one-sided state of affairs has gone for good. Take a look at the camera movement in the Bell singers film and McLean's photography in Who Will Teach Your Child? Listen to Rathburn's charming, simple and wholly expressive score to the same film, and the excellent recording of the girls' voices in the Bell choir—and it is none too easy to keep purity in the female voice when it goes up high and you may see what we mean. The Canadians have lost their terrible Transatlantic habit of making their commentators scream at the audience until it is bludgeoned into mute submission, and they write these same commenturies with a skill which we rarely reach. Maybe some of the films are a wee bit too long: maybe some of the post-synching in Home Town Paper does look a little odd at times: but these chaps definitely have something, and if we don't pull our socks up a mighty long way we are going to have members of the Board coming over here to teach us our job. Come to think of it, the idea's not such a bad one at that.



WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF

DOCUMENTARY TECHNICIANS ALLIANCE LTD



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GERRARD 2826

# Research & Films

IT HAS lately become apparent that a special Film Research Service is required to meet the needs of the variety of bodiesfilm units, academic institutions, charitable and educational trusts, business organizations and Government departments—connected with the documentary film, and interested in extending its work and influence.

The Research Division at Film Centre has been established to meet this need and is now available to carry out sponsored research into all matters connected with films and visual aids. The facilities offered cover a wide field from the investigation of subjectmatter and the preparation of topic analyses

home and overseas, sociological investigations and historical research.

Discussions are also beginning about the possibilities of making a comprehensive inquiry into the value of the film as an instrument of scientific research, particularly emphasizing the way in which it might assist the social scientist, giving to him what he lacks at the moment—a form of microscope and instrument of measurement.

By centralizing background research for films, it will be possible to speed up the preparatory work necessary before a film can go into production, thus helping to make production as a whole more economical to audience and distribution surveys at and more efficient. By studying existing films

and maintaining proper catalogue records the Division will also be able to assist producers to avoid overlap and supply them with source material.

In addition to outside commitments. the Division intends to undertake original research of its own, and to make what contribution it can in published form towards extending and deepening knowledge of the documentary film in the many fields with which it is associated. Hence it becomes an additional link between documentary films on the one hand and a whole variety of outside organizations amongst whom the universities will be a new, most important addition.

## FILMS PRODUCED IN SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER, 1948

TITLE	UNIT	No. of REELS	PRODUCER	DIRECTOR	REG. FOR QUOTA	DIS
A.A. Action	Merlin	3 reels	Hankinson, M.	Gunn, G.		
Adversis Major	Blackheath	_1 reel		Cathles, R.	No	
Airfield into Farmfield	COI	½ reel		This is Britain' serie		
Asdie Series, Two Films	Basic	2 reels	Baxter, R.	Rhodes, J.	No	(Admiralty)
Bernard Miles on Gundogs	International Realist	2 reels	Wright, B.	Wright, B.	Yes	
British Steel	Data	I reel	Alexander, D.	Thompson, T.	Yes	
Crossroad Drill	Blackheath	1 reel		Cathles, R.	No	
England's Wealth from Wool	Basic	3 reels	Baxter, R.	Napier-Bell, J.		
Every Drop to Drink	World Wide	2 reels	Bond, R.	Francis, M.		
Farm in Spring	COI	½ reel		This is Britain' series		
Farmer and the Goatherd	Greenpark			Cyprus is an Island'	No	
Fishermans Yarn, A	World Wide	2 reels	Rotha, P.	Holmes, J.		
Good Health	World Wide	2 reels	Carr, J.	Dyment, C.		
Heating Research for Houses	Crown	3 reels	Taylor, J.	Warren, E.		
Katsina	Crown	1 reel				
Kelvin Hughes Marine Radar	Basic	2 reels	Baxter, R.	Napier-Bell, J.		
King's Colours by the King to the RAF	Pathe	1 reel	Baylis, P.		Th.	
Major Power on the Land	Pathe	3 reels	Baylis, P.		Lim.	N-th
Mining Review No. 2	Data	1 reel	Alexander, D.		Yes	
Mining Review No. 3 (Second Year)	Data	1 reel	Alexander, D.		Yes	
Peaceful Years, The	Pathe	6 reels	Baylis, P.		Yes	Th.
Probation Officer	Data	4 reels	Alexander, D.	Holmes, J.	No	
Plan to Work on, A	Basic	3 reels	Baxter, R.	Mander, K.	No	
Radar AA No. 1 Mark 6	Basic	2 reels	Baxter, R.	Sherman, J.	No	(Army)
RAF Festival Reunion	Pathe	$1\frac{1}{2}$ reels	Baylis, P.			N-th
Rhondda and Wye	Crown	2 reels	Taylor, J.	Welsh, D.		
Scottish Universities	Data	2 reels	Alexander, D.	Gysin, F.	Yes	
Spinning (Silent)	Basic	1½ reels	Baxter, R.	Napier-Bell, J.	No	
Summer-Drought Island	Greenpark		Re-edited from '	Cyprus is an Island'	No	
Summing Up No. 9	Pathe	$1\frac{1}{2}$ reels	Baylis, P.			Th.
This is Britain No. 29	Merlin	1 reel	Hankinson, M.			
,, ,, ,, No. 30	Merlin	1 reel	Hankinson, M.			
,, ,, ,, No. 31	Merlin	1 reel	Hankinson, M.			
Trained to Serve	Crown	2 reels	Taylor, J.	Wallace, G.		
Tree of Wealth	Crown	1 reel		lm of same title made		
Tube Wells	Crown	1 reel		lm of same title made		ion Films Indi
Weather and Sunspots	COI	$\frac{1}{2}$ reel		This is Britain' series		
Weaving (Silent)	Basic	$1\frac{1}{2}$ reels	Baxter, R.	Napier-Bell, J.	No	
Work and Speed	COI	+ reel	Re-edited from '	This is Britain' series	3	

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# What we don't do . . .

Every now and then our Secretary pleads that our advertisement should bleakly state: Realist Film Unit does not sell or loan films. That and nothing else—to save the time and postage of enquirers and ourselves.

This is usually sidetracked into reflections about the garbled versions of our name on some of the envelopes—such as 'Realism Ltd', 'Real Films', 'the Reality Film Unit'...

However, as it's the New Year, we give in and publish the plea: wondering, nevertheless, what an enquirer can do to discover the whereabouts of films we've made, except to write to *Realistic-I-think-it-was*, and ask.

# REALIST FILM UNIT LIMITED 9 GREAT CHAPEL STREET, W.1 Gerrard 1958

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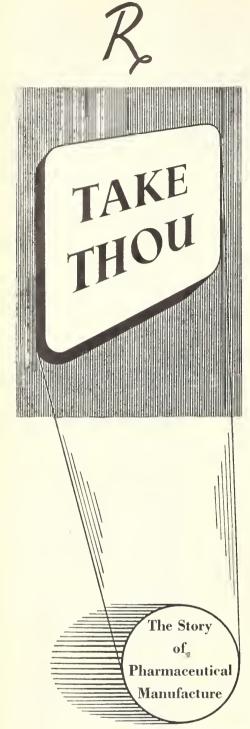
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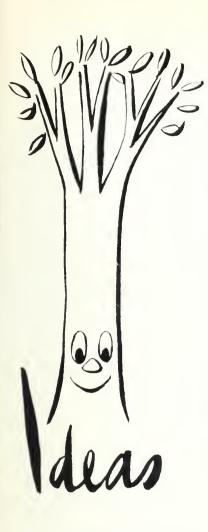
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JANUARY 1949

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VOL. 8 NO. 71 JAN 1949

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#### BRITISH FILM CRISIS

Scene 1. Wardour Street

HAROLD WILSON:

The industry has been having financial crises throughout its history.

DAILY FILM RENTER:

Really though, this parrot cry of crisis is a bit wearying.

HARRY MEARS (CEA):

The only things that can save us are a revision of entertainment tax, and a reduced quota, or better still, book British films on their merits.

SIR ALEXANDER KORDA:

The Scottish critics, who should know . . .

TODAY'S CINEMA:

One is tempted to wonder how Mr Wilson feels now, about the ill-advised policies he has adopted for the film industry—policies which have alienated American goodwill, and have resulted in diminishing markets elsewhere.

BRITISH FILM PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION:

The Quota can be filled.

SYDNEY WYNNE (Rank PRO):

If you looked at the national Press, you would think the British Film Industry was a corpse.

STUDIO WORKERS:

Representatives of the ten studios now open met on Sunday and called for a new public relations policy from the unions to supply the true facts of the film crisis to the public.

DAILY FILM RENTER:

One way and another, labour is ruling the roost—or, at least, trying to.

KINEMATOGRAPH WEEKLY:

Mr Wilson told delegates of the studio union on Tuesday that he had plans to assist the immediate financial problems of producers through private channels of finance.

ASSOCIATION OF CINL TECHNICIANS:

We asked Mr Wilson to commandeer two studios and make them available to independent producers, while making sure that they receive distribution and exhibition facilities

DAILY FILM RENTER:

The question of nationalization was raised several times, but was ignored by the President of the Board of Trade

ALL (Except ACT):

Goody, Goody.

# Film in Educational and Social Life

## By DILYS POWELL

IT WAS, I believe, the Duke of Wellington who, faced with the development of the English railway system, opposed the movement on the grounds that it would encourage the poor to wander aimlessly about from place to place. Today we move about aimlessly, no doubt, and a great deal faster than in Wellington's time. But when I say, repeating a truism, that we live in an age of speed. I mean not simply that transport is quicker and communication more abrupt than ever before. I do not mean simply that we have made it possible to project high explosives farther and faster, or that atomic fissure has made the old diplomatic methods of presenting an ultimatum appear delightfully leisurely. I mean that the pace of discovery, development and superannuation in the world of ideas itself has acquired a new haste. Even memory is shorter: quicker to forget. It is almost exactly seven years to the day since the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour and the opening of the first great Russian offensive which drove the Germans from Moscow. But we forget: memory can only with difficulty recapture the emotions of those huge days. So much has intervened: so many crises, such fabulous experience, 'The world is so full of a number of things, I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.' The world is so full of a number of things that the mind refuses to accept them. In this age of speed in change the mind feels the need to protect itself, to preserve some kind of stability by forgetting, sometimes by ignoring. Four centuries ago the curious and subtle Montaigne found humanity elusive, changeable, diverse. In the twentieth century the human individual is the stable, the changeless factor.

This world of change and speed has been a bad nursery for the artist. The new instability of the framework of society was recognized a quarter of a century ago and more by T. S. Eliot, when in The Waste Land he described a civilization rusting away under the influence of uncertainty and disbelief. Eliot was to return to a system of religious belief; since Eliot some of the more confident spirits among younger poets have tried to find conviction in the very change which surrounded them, to elicit the material of poetry from the physical imagery of the slag-heap and the turbine. The attempt was, one feels, looking back at the 'thirties, unhappy; and nearly all that is valuable in the poetry of our time has proceeded from a revolt against

the form and pressure of the age. But for the cinema, that upstart arrogant art, the air of change has been life itself. It is in change that the cinema has grown and flourished, and of change that it has been a manifestation. Nothing has been more mutable than the cinema with its suddenly shining and suddenly vanishing stars and its films out of date in a decade. And nothing has been more indicative of mutability than the development of this popular pleasure.

Less than three years ago we were celebrating the fiftieth birthday of the films. Two years ago we remembered that the sound film, the talking picture which we accept without question, was only twenty years old. The vast majority of those who go to the cinema today—since the films are the pleasure of the young rather than the old or the middle-aged—have never seen a silent film. They take it for granted that the shadows on the screen will speak and bang doors, and that love-making will be accompanied by full, invisible orchestra. Even those who remember the silent film—which itself advanced from the accompaniment of a single pianist rattling off Mendelssohn's Spring Song or Chopin's Funeral March to the splendour of a full team in the orchestra pit—even they take for granted the elaborate technique of the contemporary motion picture. Yet the thing has grown in a man's lifetime. Fifty years ago or less the film was a fair-ground turn, a peepshow. Literally a peep-show: relics still persist on Brighton Pier, where the slotmachines will show you primitive films of dancing girls and similar delights; I do not guarantee that you will see what the butler saw, but you will see something very like it. In my childhood the cinema had escaped from the peep-show, but it was still treated with small respect: it served, for instance, as a last turn in the music-hall. One went to Boscombe Hippodrome to see Marie Lloyd or George Lashwood; the audience trooped out to the accompaniment of a vaguely flickering news film. You can judge how immense the change since then in social status. Today we have a National Film Library and a Royal Command Film Performance; and the cinema enjoys the serious attention of the Royal Society of Arts.

In half a century, then, we have made an honest woman of the cinema; though there are a few people left protesting that the woman is still fallen; not so long ago I was honoured with a tract assuring me that films

were red with ruin. The reformers speak. I take it, of the fiction film, not of the documentary or instructional cinema; unless, of course, they have discovered indelicacy in the glimpses, admirably offered in this country by educational film-makers, into the private life of the fern, the stickleback or the liver fluke. No doubt of it, the reformers are right to concentrate on the film made, not for instruction, but for fun. The documentary and educational film has grown out of recognition during these last twenty years; in this country it reaches a large and a growing public. But it forms only a fraction of the cinema as a whole; its influence cannot equal the influence of the fantasies, brilliant and alluring, which draw queues night after night, week after week, to theatres rightly called. in the old days, picture palaces. The influence of the fiction film is upon the whole public, or nearly the whole public: listen in a crowd, in a train, in a bus, and sooner or later you will hear the conversation turn to the piece at the Odeon or the Granada. And I think it will not be out of place, in this brief consideration of the development of the film in educational and social life, to look back for a moment over the moods and the themes of the popular cinema.

The producer's difficulty has always been to find subjects enough to satisfy the public longing for a story, and it is only natural that the screen writer should spend much of his time at the library shelves. In the early years of the cinema literary originals, from the classics downwards, provided plots for onereel films; Parsifal was rattled off in less than ten minutes, and so were Dr Jekvll and Mr Hyde, Uncle Tom's Cabin and As You Like It. Those were the days of the cinema's innocence, when emotions were simple and morals clearly defined. We were to wait forty years or so for the advent of schizophrenia, which today explains all and excuses all. And when the first and greatest of all the creative artists in the cinema began to make himself felt, when the American D. W. Griffith began directing the vast panoramic films which taught the world to take the cinema seriously, the morals of the screen were still Victorian morals, dominated, like the novels of Dickens, by simple concepts of courage, loyalty, love, tenderness.

In the decade which followed the grand period of Griffith, other concepts were influencing the screen, and, through the screen, the millions who by the 'twenties were going

The development of the Film in Educational and Social Life is the Peter Le Neve Foster lecture, given by Miss Dilys Powell to the Royal Society of Arts, by whose permission this article is printed.

to the cinema. Already during the 1914–1918 war Theda Bara had created a new film type —the vamp. By 1919, Cecil B. DeMille was remarking: 'The ruined woman is as out of style as the Victorian who used to faint'; and in the years after the war a sophisticated and cynical view of sex temporarily superseded the romantic view. It would be rash to claim that the sophistication of the films in this period had any very great direct influence on behaviour. But the screen, which acquired early in its life a remarkable sensitiveness to popular moods and fashions, by reflecting certain current ideas helped to make them known to a vast public. It would, I think, be fair to say that the screen familiarized audiences living remote from capital cities with metropolitan shades of feeling.

Yet in spite of this note of cynicism in the films of the 'twenties the cinema retained to the end of the silent period its basic innocence. The great comedians of the 'twenties -Charles Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, Buster Keaton-spoke, without a word said, the universal language of fun. Those were the days when a good film was a good film for everybody. No division had been set up between the highbrow and the popular audience: nobody was too smart to enjoy the cowboy exploits of Tom Mix. I must not fall into the trap of talking about the cinema as if it were a purely American creation. By the second half of the 'twenties the work of Continental directors was leaking into this country: French realism, German expressionism, Swedish landscape-painting, and, presently, the troubling revolutionary furies of the Russians. But, if we are to consider the cinema as an element in English social life it is mainly to the output of America that we must look-mainly, that is, until we come to the 1940s, to the renaissance of our native cinema and the revivifying influence of the documentary style. The suffocation of British films during the 1914-1918 war and after is an old, sad story. I need not recount here the stages by which American films came to occupy, to the exclusion, almost, of everything else, British screens; nor is this the occasion to enumerate the attempts at legislation for the benefit of British film-makers in the home market. Today, twenty years or so after the first suggestions of a quota for British films, our native industry has reached yet another economic crisis. But today at least we can see films which reflect, however crudely, the life of our own people. For a quarter of a century audiences from Land's End to John O'Groats looked, when they went to the cinema, at the American scene: American cities, clothes, habits. For more than a decade they listened to American speech and American idiom. In all that time a boy or girl in a manufacturing town in the north or a market town in the south might well have had a clearer idea of New York or Chicago than of London.

The influence of films on popular habits and ideas increased with the addition of

sound to the silent shadows of photography. And with the loss of silence the innocent age of the cinema ended. Henceforward the screen was to speak with undertones of knowledge, good and evil. The simple, naïve poetry of love and courage was gone, never to return; speech had introduced new complexities into the interpretation of life and character. We have all felt at times how basely the cinema has betrayed its opportunities for the rendering of the human scene. But it is fatally easy to be pompous about the films: to complain about their vulgarity, their silliness, their frequent brutality, and to forget that, simply because the cinema is ubiquitous and powerful, it is apt to be judged more harshly than the popular manifestations of the other arts. The critics of social influences never think to read the thousands of bad and vulgar novels; they ignore what is odious in the newspapers; their attack is concentrated almost wholly on the cinema. Yet humanity fell now and then into error before the invention of the cinema; and, indeed, much as I personally shrink from the savagery of many a gangster film. I should hesitate to recommend in its place one of those pleasant outings, popular with our ancestors, to a public hanging.

One must beware, too, of over-estimating even so minor a part of the cinema's influence as its effect on fashions and manners. In the United States, it seems, direct imitation of the film star is widespread; when Norma Shearer played Juliet, millions of American women appeared in jewelled caps; when the English film of Pygmalion was shown, American shop-girls brushed up their society manners by reading what a public library called 'books Eliza should have read'books such as Well-Bred English and Give Yourself Background. When Clark Gable, in It Happened One Night, disclosed the fact that he wore no undershirt, 'the sale of masculine underwear', says Margaret Thorp in that excellent book America at the Movies. 'declined so sharply immediately afterwards that knitwear manufacturers and garment workers' unions sent to the producers asking them to take out the scene'. The English are less sensitive about their underwear or, indeed, their overwear: at any rate I have not heard that the demand in this country for frilled shirts was appreciably altered by the appearance of James Mason in The Man in Grey. Yet, no doubt of it, the movies do affect mass fashions. I for one can see little harm in an influence which persuades young women to brush their hair more often and keep themselves, as the advertisers have it, neat about the ankles.

I may seem to be dwelling on the social consequences of the popular film when I might devote my time to discussing more solemn and perhaps worthier material. But thirty million tickets or thereabouts are bought for the cinema in Britain every week; and to the buyers the cinema does not mean

the documentary film, nor the newsreel, nor The March of Time, not This Modern Age even—though one learns with gratification that this British series of inquiries into political, economic and controversial subjects has a growing public. In London and in one or two provincial cities the Continental cinema has a small adoring audience. But to the shop-girl, the mill-hand, the officeworker, to the boy or the girl just leaving school to earn a living, the cinema means Danny Kaye and Margaret Lockwood, it means Rita Hayworth and Abbott and Costello, Stewart Granger and Humphrey Bogart, Lana Turner and Bing Crosby, Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour; it means romance, colour, excitement and an escape from the fog, the bus-queue and the gas-ring.

Players such as these, figures seen only as shadows on the brilliantly-lit rectangle at the end of the auditorium, are sharply real to those who go often to the cinema; there are times when they seem more real than Mr Attlee. They have become part of the fabric of life. The impact of their imaginary adventures may be superficial. Yet the fantasies which they create, fantasies of love and death, fantasies of wealth, romance and the underworld, are in their cumulative effect more powerful even than those serious and realistic films which now and then, bragging a little, edge on to the universal screen. For the cinema of entertainment has its serious moments: more than is commonly conceded: now and then there even emerges some great monument to human suffering and tenacity, such as, before the war, The Grapes of Wrath. The Grapes of Wrath came to us from America: Hollywood still sends us now and then some essay in controversial fiction, a Gentleman's Agreement perhaps. I believe myself that the moral influence of these openly didactic fictions is small, and that anyone already blind enough and stupid enough to be, say, anti-Semitic will not be converted by Cross-Fire—which belongs to the same controversial group as Gentleman's Agreement. But the mention of these titles, with their reminder of the present attempt in Hollywood to set against the pure fantasy of the musical film the solid and occasionally savage realism of the message-film, brings me to a crux in the social history of the cinema; the emergence and the influence of the documentary film.

In the period of the silent cinema, programmes were often padded out by what were known as interest films; films, that is to say, whose distinguishing quality was that they were not interesting. Anybody who frequented the films in those far-off days will remember the interminable trips through meaningless landscape, the busy little fingers making useless articles, the coolies hacking away in fields full of puddles. It was not until well on in the 'twenties that the film of fact, transformed into what we now call the documentary, made a genuine and exciting contribution to the cinema medium in Britain.

For the sources of the contemporary documentary we must look not to the interest film but to the work in America of Robert Flaherty and to the Russian cinema, which, bursting on an affrighted world, taught a young Scot, John Grierson, among others that the ordinary man, living and working, was in himself heroic and his work in itself exciting.

So much that is valuable has been said and written about the development of the documentary film in this country-I recall in particular a lecture delivered before the Royal Society of Arts by Sir Stephen Tallents himself-that I should be tedious were I to go over the ground again. Today the farmer, the cook, the doctor, the engineer, the naturalist can learn from the factual film; he can assimilate new methods and involved techniques through this visual medium; he can learn about the behaviour of butterflies and the workings of blood transfusion; he can learn how to make steel, how to drive a tank, even how to make short pastry. All over the country specialized audiences are grappling, helped by the instructional film, with fresh ideas and techniques.

But when we come to look we see that the triumph of the instructional film is a direct result of the war we have just survived. Modern war means that unskilled men and women have to learn at speed highly skilled trades; they have to learn the handling of machinery, the working of engines of destruction: the cinema can help them. Modern warfare means that people have to be persuaded to do things contrary to their custom and their nature; they have to be persuaded to part with their children, to leave their homes, to eat unaccustomed food, to accept unaccustomed guests. The need for some instrument to perform these tasks of persuasion as well as instruction gave the cinema its chance. And, its powers once displayed, the film has held its place as a weapon of propaganda and information. We should, however, be belittling the functions of the non-fiction film in society were we to overlook a less tangible contribution.

In the 'thirties one or two documentary producers began to experiment with a type of film which, though its setting was fact, permitted the intrusion of imagination into character and story. North Sea, for instance, made in 1938 by Cavalcanti and Harry Watt: this story of the ship-to-shore radio service off the north-east coast of Scotland used trawlermen and radio operators as its actors, but in its shaping of plot allowed itself an element of fiction. Extraordinary things were to proceed, during the war, from this marriage of fact and imagination: Target for Tonight, Western Approaches, Fires Were Started, Coastal Command, to name a few: films with not only truth, not only visual beauty, but also human warmth. The documentary film in this country has not always been free of pedantry. But there was no pedantry in the portraits of the airmen in

Target for Tonight, none in the touching conversation piece in Fires Were Started, with the firemen singing 'One man went to mow' while they wait for the alarm call. And suddenly the audience which watched these reflections, these reconstructions rather, of the life around it—suddenly the audience was united in a new understanding and sympathy. Suddenly we were taken back to those days of the cinema's innocence when a good film was a good film for everybody. And here, in my opinion, was the triumph of the cinema in war-time. Education for a limited object is important: education for the professions or the crafts. It is important to know about silage and smoke abatement; it may even be important to know how to make short pastry. Education is the skeleton of life: without it society collapses. But society, like the human being, cannot persist as a skeleton only. The story-documentaries made in this country during the war brought into the cinema the living breath.

All this-the documentary film in wartime, the instruction in new techniques of living, the crystallization of national sentiment in the group of fiction-documentaries, the growth in short of what Grierson called 'the creative treatment of actuality'—is our common experience. But in the age of speed even the war years recede from memory, dwindling and fading like a view seen from the last coach of a train; meanwhile a new generation grows up to which our common experience has become dead history. I said just now that the majority of those who go to the cinema have never seen a silent film. Millions today in this country will never have heard of Target for Tonight. Target for Tonight was made in 1941, and in the lightning life of the cinema seven years is a long time. But the new cinema-generation are going to the films in greater numbers, probably, than their parents before them. The cinema has become a habit with children. They go, of course, to the children's matinées, where they see pieces of varying quality. Some of the new entertainment films being made for child audiences are very good: I do not hope to see a more charming story of adventure than Bush Christmas. The residue from the past, on the other hand, is sometimes deplorable: though I am not of the party which believes that the cowboys-and-Indians piece will necessarily breed a race of hooligans. A riskier part in moral education, I fancy, is played by the crude films of urban violence which are to be seen in cinemas for adults: films in which every argument is settled with an automatic, and making an arrest means shooting a man dead. The whole question of the attendance of children at cinemas is at present the subject of a Government inquiry. In the meantime the schools are concerning themselves with the idea of turning the weapon of the cinema to their own use.

The employment of the film as an instrument of education within the school has been

a matter of slow growth in this country. The number of projectors in school use even so lately as 1946 was comparatively small: according to one estimate, seventeen hundred silent projectors and four hundred sound projectors: according to another, a total of three thousand of all types, (Whether the disparity in the estimates is to be accounted for by the secrecy of the schools, or by the deficient mathematical education of the inquirers, I am not prepared to say.) America is far ahead of us here: in Chicago alone there are a thousand school film projectors, in New York eleven hundred. But with the setting up of the National Committee for Visual Aids in Education a new era has, presumably, begun. Teaching films and films strips are produced, scrutinized and used in increasing numbers: geography films, films about natural history and the crafts. Obviously this is laudable, since most children learn more easily through their eyes than through their ears; and I stand selfcondemned as a reactionary when I say that, as an obstinately literary type, I am thankful that my formal education is over. But even my kind might have benefited by a little visual aid in, say, geography, where the use of the film as an adjunct to the text-book might serve to correct, for example, the belief, common in my youth, that the population of modern Athens went about in white nightdresses, caught, rather unbecomingly for the full figure, high round the chest.

The cinema, then, is taking its place in laying the foundations of education. Yet I cannot help feeling that the film in schools has other functions than to impart the principles of, say, chemistry. If we look back at the life of the other arts—for I persist in regarding the cinema as an art—we find that they existed for themselves before they were put to alien practical uses. Or rather I should say that they had their origin in humane and religious needs before they became didactic instruments. Man wrote poetry before he began to use language as a means of teaching algebra. The development of the cinema has been so sudden that, almost before it has established its right to existence for its own sake, we are putting it to practical uses. Well, it is to the good that the films should be an instrument in a society which needs more and more instruments. But I think we should not forget that, even within the circle of education, the cinema has a right to be looked at for itself. We use drawing to teach accuracy of eye. we use language to teach geography. But we also teach literature: in our more reckless moods we even teach art. It is useless to complain of the moral and social ill-effects of the cinema if we do not ever suggest to children in the schools, to the new generation of audiences, that there are good films and bad, just as there are good books and bad. In other words I should like to see others follow the example of certain enterprising and enlightened

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# Film Society Movement in Australia

#### MALCOLM OTTON

WHEN in 1940 John Grierson came to Australia to strengthen Dominion ties on behalf of the Imperial Relations Trust (and was sent, incidentally, straight to see MGM), there wasn't a solitary Film Society in the length and breadth of the continent.

In the State capitals, a small cinema screened an occasional French film, a Kermesse Heroique or a Carnet de Bal; the Post Office had a few prints of the GPO Film Unit's documentaries, but public taste for the staple fare of the English Film Societies was yet to be awakened

But the War years proved that Grierson's suggestions did not fall on deaf ears. Stemming from his talks with various Federal and State Ministers, Documentary Film Committees were set up in Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane. They were financed by the Imperial Relations Trust, and immediately proved that there was a lively demand for nonfiction films in Australia. Though short of staff and limited in funds, these State Film Centres swiftly created a wide appreciation of the manifold uses of 16 mm film. Today, financed by their respective State Education Departments, acting too as distributing agents for the National Film Library established in Canberra in 1945, the Centres are the axletrees of the Film Society movement.

During the mid-war years, the spate of documentary films from Great Britain and America rapidly widened the Australian non-theatrical audience, and with the armed forces putting 16 mm to full use, there sprang up a vivid awareness of the power of the cinema as a tool of social criticism and educational construction.

1944 saw leader articles and national broadcasts on Documentary, pioneered by A. K. Stout, Chairman of the NSW Documentary Films Committee and Professor of Philosophy at Sydney University (late of the Edinburgh Film Guild), leading to the foundation of the first Australian Film Society, the Sydney Workers' Educational Association Film Group, Later that year the Australian Film Society. (Victorian Division) was set up in Melbourne, while early in 1945 the Sydney Film Society was inaugurated. Then a Society developed around the Canberra Film Centre, several other cities followed suit, and today there are between fifteen and twenty full-time Australian Film Societies in action, with more in process of formation—apart, of course, from countless groups centred around Parents' and Citizens' Associations, Trade Union Clubs, and various social organizations using narrow-gauge film for cultural and educational purposes.

From this brief flashback it is clear that the Australian Film Society movement has a background quite different from that of the British movement. Both are basically concerned with screening the best available films, keen to give screen-space to the new, the unusual and the experimental in cinema. But here in Australia the emphasis has been perforce upon the factual rather than upon the fiction film.

Subscriptions, and funds, have always been low, and the cost of importing Continental features absolutely prohibitive. The few features available have come from one or two small independent importers, or from the Russian Embassy, which brought in such godsends as Alexander Nevsky, and Mark Donskoi's The Rainbow. But even if more 35 mm features were available, very few Societies would benefit, as the Projectionists' Union bans Sunday screenings, and no cinema will consider one-night stands except on exorbitant terms.

'Trade' opposition to the Film Societies in the past has ranged from violent antagonism to splenetic apathy, but in the past six months, with the belated but financially successful importation of a few such excellent productions as Les Enfants du Paradis, Open City, Symphonie Pastorale, and Les Visiteurs du Soir, two or three managers are beginning to believe (we hope) that the folk who enjoy 'foreign' films are neither long-hairs, 'reffos' nor agents of a foreign power, but normal adults with a bias against stereotyped entertainment, 'The Trade' withholds all films, no matter how old, from the Film Societies unless they can fulfil the impossible condition of screening them in a commercial theatre under 'trade' conditions. Sixteen millimetre prints of British features such as Odd Man Out and Brief Encounter were recently imported by one firm, but their distribution to anyone except boarding schools, nunneries, etc., was immediately banned by 'the trade'. Inquiries made recently about 35 mm prints of Citizen Kane and Grapes of Wrath met the reply that all prints had been destroyed.

Sixteen millimetre then, bless its heart, has proved and will continue to be the backbone of the Australian Film Societies. Much may be lost, we realize, in quality of sound and image, but perhaps this is compensated for by the friendly informality of Society screenings in the smaller halls and clubrooms so suitable for 16 mm protection. Some country groups, isolated by hundreds of miles, owe their entire existence to the portable substandard projector and the low cost of freight for its films. An attempt is now being made by one or two commercial distributors to build up rural circuits among backblock audiences-this being a field which could be tilled very fruitfully by the State Agriculture Depart-

Relations between the Australian Societies are remarkably cordial, considering the long distances separating them and the natural rivalry of the city groups to scoop the all-too-rare new films. 1949 should see the establishment of a Commonwealth Federation of Film Societies, giving the movement an authoritative national status. In Victoria and Tasmania the move is afoot to set up State Federations, which will collaborate, it is hoped, with the Canberra Film Centre and the Federation of NSW Film Societies.

This latter body, inaugurated early in 1948 after nearly a year's spadework by the Sydney

Film Society, now has some twelve full-time Film Societies as members, and eight part-time Film Groups as affiliates. A regular bulletin is in production, a State Convention of Film Societies with a weekend Summer School is on the calendar later this year, and a representative, John Heyer, Director of the new Shell Australian Film Unit, has been appointed to the NSW Documentary and Educational Films Council.

That Australian Film Society members do not join up merely to 'see something different' is evident from these aims, taken from the Federation Constitution:

'To secure representation on Government and other Committees relating to films.'

'To improve the standard of commercial film programmes for adults and children.

'To increase the supply of films available to

Film Societies and to improve non-theatrical film distribution generally.'

There is general appreciation on all Society Committees of the importance of film as a mass medium, and perhaps a brief survey of the activities of that Society to which I belong, the Sydney Film Society, will demonstrate the truth of this.

The Society has two regular monthly screenings which are advertised as a matter of policy in the Press and open to the general public. A monthly discussion group argues the merits and techniques of films such as Sucksdorff's Rhythm of a City or Jennings' Cumberland Story. A monthly eight-page magazine with a rising circulation of about 800 is printed (exchanges are welcome), and a growing library of film books is available to members. Last winter a course of lectures on Film Production was held, among the speakers being Stanley Hawes, Harry Watt, and Geoffrey Bell. Social evenings are popular, and discussion is encouraged at all screenings, where distinguished visitors such as Eugene Goossens or Ralph Smart are invited to speak. A Scientific Film Group died an untimely death last year, but a production unit is now mooted; the Committee is constantly conferring with educational and cultural groups to further the appreciation of film in the city. Annual subscription is £I, with a 6d. levy for the Federation, and concessions for students and others under 21.

Much encouragement and assistance has been given to the Film Society movement, particularly in NSW, by the United Kingdom Information Office and the Canadian National Film Board, which both have 16 mm film libraries, and also by the British Council. The growing output of Australian documentaries from the Film Division of the Commonwealth Department of Information, under Producer-in-Chief Stanley Hawes, a colleague of Grierson's in Canada and founder of the Birmingham Film Society, has also given audiences considerable food for thought on home affairs. A spice of variety comes on occasion, too, from the small collections of the French, Czech and Swedish Consu-

# Realist Tradition in Italian Films

### Ьy

#### R. E. WHITEHALL

THE SPECTACULAR rise of the Italian film industry since the end of the war has been much commented upon, but it has recently been suggested by some writers that the flood of vital films from Italy is in danger of drying up. This suggestion is probably due to the financial difficulties of the Rossellini films, and the commercial failure in Italy of Vittorio de Sica's bitter Shoeshine, coupled with the box-office success of some ponderous costume dramas and arid comedies, from which it has been deducted that the realism of so many Italian films is not popular.

This, however is not entirely a true picture: it overlooks the success of a number of realistic films; it does not take into account the talents of such directors as Rossellini, Luigi Zampa, or that group of Italian directors practically unknown in Britain-Luchino Visconti, Pietro Germi, Guiseppe de Santis, Duilo Coletti who work in a semi-documentary style; it forgets the naturalistic talents of Aldo Fabrizi or Anna Magnani; and it overlooks the production programme of Lux Films.

This company, Lux, has been in the forefront in the use of factual backgrounds or semidocumentary themes. Between 1945 and 1947 they produced To Live in Peace, Angelina MP and An American on Leave, directed by Luigi Zampa; Two Anonymous Letters by Mario Camerini; Anna Magnani's two working-class comedies, Down with Misery and Down with Poverty, either of which might have come from Chaplin; Alberto Lattauda's The Crime of Giovanni Episcopo, wtih Aldo Fabrizi in the leading role.

Within the last year Lux have produced most of the significant films of the period. Luigi Zampa's Difficult Years is a human comedy adapted from a short story by the playwrightnovelist Vitaliano Brancati, looking back over twenty years of Fascist rule and the dangers of compromise, treated in the manner of To Live in Peace.

Mario Soldati's Flight into France is this director's most successful film since Signor Travet in 1946. Forgetting the heavy un-cinematic nature of the novels of Balzac and Fogazzaro which have furnished him with the basis of his last few films, culminating in the unbelievably static Daniele Cortis, Soldati took a theme which is part and parcel of post-war Europe—the search for war criminals.

The subject matter is described by the production company thus: 'Many men and women have been tempted by the mirage of a new life beyond the frontiers of their warravaged countries to risk the dangers of an illegal crossing of the Alps, discounting the risks of tempest, cold, and death. This is the background of reality to Fuga in Francia, the story of a condemned war criminal who, escaping from prison, takes a false name and joins a little band of clandestine emigrants. Cold, calculating, without compassion or mercy, the fugitive is deterred by no scruples when he finds himself discovered . . . .

The claim that Flight to France has a background to reality is no idle one. The main action was shot in the valleys and high passes of the Graian Alps and the unit of 32 people, technicians and players, often worked in a temperature below zero. The approach is pure documentary—only two actors appeared in the film, Folco Lulli and Pietro Germi (this was the latter's first appearance, he is actually an extremely fine director).

The other parts in the film were cast on the spot. The heroine was discovered by Soldati in the Fiat works at Mirafiore, and returned there when the film was completed. Other parts were played by a builder, a journalist, and by the director and the producer of the film. The smaller roles were filled by their reallife counterparts.

Pietro Germi, who played the emigrant who is instrumental in the ultimate death of the war criminal, is a young Genoese graduate of the Centro Sperimentale, the Italian film school. who has made three films, all of which have their roots deep in the real life of the Italian people, and the problems of our time. He is interested in economic conditions as they affect individuals. The Witness, while drawing its inspiration from everyday life does so in a traditional way, with its story of a young servant girl trying to save her condemned fiancé; but Lost Youth and In the Name of the Law go beyond the basic 'thriller' ingredients in their approach. The former deals with a new generation of Italian youth, freed not only from the Fascists but from law and order and all moral standards, while the latter deals with the notorious secret society, the 'Mafia'.

Lost Youth deals, specifically, with a group of university students and with Stefano, the degenerate leader of a gang of youthful criminals. It is a hard, tough film which, as Shoeshine did, harks back in many ways to the prewar social films made by Warner Brothers. It is a study in circumstances and environment shot against actual backgrounds, and so realistic in its approach it proved too strong for the stomachs of the authorities, who banned itan act creating such a storm of criticism in the film industry the authorities quickly reversed their decision and allowed it to be screened.

In the Name of the Law was again filmed almost entircly on location. It deals with the secret society which supplied America with some of its most notorious gangsters (and Hollywood with some of its best films), stressing the tie-up between these racketeers administering their own brand of justice on the peasants, and the rich landowners who are guaranteed tranquillity on their estates. In the last reel of the film the message underlying the whole work is given in plain words by the honest

judge—the delinquents, the murderers, are no less guilty than those who stand by and do

Were it only for these films to represent the total achievement of the recent Italian cinema it would constitute a remarkable record, enriching society with the force of their emotional outlook, but the honesty and consistency of the new films by Luchino Visconti and Guiseppe de Santis testifies to the strength of the younger directors who do not seek refuge in escape, and who are not so tired they cannot see the future for the past.

Visconti, known over here by the glowing reports of his Obsession—an adaptation of The Postman Always Rings Twice, which cannot be shown because it was produced during the war, and the producers omitted to acquire the screen rights—has recently completed The Earth Trembles, made on location in Sicily and dealing with the harsh struggle for existence by a community of fishermen. It was made with a cast of non-professional players.

Just as the quality and force in the work of Pietro Germi was apparent in his first film, so the directorial debut of Guiseppe de Santis, formerly a script-writer, has been hailed by the critics during 1948. Tragic Chase, made for the ANPI (National Association of Italian Partisans), is set against a peasant background, dealing with Fascists and collaborationists, who prey on the peasants until the latter rise up and destroy them. The second film from this director, Bitter Rice, filmed in the rice-fields of nothern Italy with Vittorio Gassmann, a very fine actor who was seen in London during the Italian Stage Festival at the Cambridge Theatre. This has only recently been completed, as have Castellani's In the Sunlight of Rome, which is supposed to surpass Shoeshine in its realism, and Duilio Coletti's Exodus, treating on the flight of European Jews to Palestine, with the British-born actress Marina Berti in the lead. This film is made somewhat on the lines of Rossellini's moving piece of reportage from the flaking ruins of Berlin, Germany Year Zero.

Dealing, like Exodus, with the plight of European Jewry is Geoffredi Alessandrini's Wandering Jew, somewhat spoiled by the artificiality of its prologue set in ancient Jerusa-Iem, but gripping and vivid when it touches upon the fate of the Jewish people during the war. It deals with a wealthy French Jew (Vittorio Gassmann) who chooses to hide his race and collaborate with the Germans when they reach Paris. He finally chooses to stand by his people, and goes to his death in order to save hostages in a concentration camp from being murdered in retaliation for his resistance. Alessandrini is less sure of himself than most of the other directors, and although moments of The Wandering Jew achieve a perfect fusion

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# Documentary in Germany

### FROM A CORRESPONDENT

A STRIKING compilation film, Numberg has recently been released in the American Zone of Germany, It was sponsored by American Film Section under the inspiration of Pare Lorentz, who initiated the work in New York. It has been produced by Stuart Schulberg and edited by Jo Zigman. It is a summary of the Nurnberg Trial and has been made in the English and German languages. It gives a calm, unemotional summary of the proceedings and the results. Originally it was intended to build the commentary wholly from extracts from the speeches of the prosecution, defence and the witnesses, but this was found impossible. So the commentary takes the form of a précis. The film is remarkable for a number of reasons. In the first place, a great proportion of it is built up from material taken in the courts, and one has ample time to study the faces and bearing of the protagonists. A less courageous producer would have been tempted to cut away, and to allow only a minimum of the film to take place in the court. Schulberg and Zigman decided otherwise and their decision is amply justified by results.

The court scenes are supported by a collection of seized library material, including a record of a pogrom enlarged from 8 mm. and some scenes of an improvised gas chamber. To give an idea of the mentality of some of the people who took these films, the gas chamber scenes were found on 16 mm casually inserted among idyllic scenes of the countryside of occupied Poland. They had been dropped in as if they were an ordinary part of an enjoyable week's leave. The film is more than an indictment of the leaders of fascism. Though the commentary makes a sharp distinction between Nazis and Germans, the ordinary onlooker must draw the conclusion that the ramifications of the plot were so wide and deep that every German person was to some extent a participant, not only on the battlefield, but in the torture chamber. In days when some people would ask us not to give the matter of Germany's guilt another thought, the film gives a salutary reminder of things which happened only a little over three years ago. Since it has been shown with considerable success in the American Zone of Germany, it suggests that, for the first time, the German people themselves may be taking stock of their own record.

Between them, the British and American Film Sections have been responsible for promoting a number of documentary films in Germany, and at long last the movement looks like taking hold of the imagination both of producers and the public. All the films are made by German units. As one might expect, the styles of the films from the two zones are in contrast, those from the American tending to rely on library compilation and, more often than not, deliberately pointing a moral. Those from the British side tend more to be objective accounts of what is going on. They rely less on library material and more on actuality shooting.

Hunger—a joint production of the British and American Film Sections, distributed mandatorily to every cinema in the American and British Zones, was a joint affair. It was built up from library material and was issued in the spring of 1948. It was designed to make clear that much of the starvation and hunger in Germany was caused by a dislocation of world agriculture, caused, in its turn, by the German war. It explains that our Indian and other Eastern Allies have a better claim on world food supplies than the German people. The film also pointed out that a great deal of food in Germany, designed for the ration, was being diverted to the black market, owing to faulty and corrupt German administration. Since that time, American Film Section has sponsored a number of films dealing directly with the moods, feelings and outlooks of the German people. It's Up To You contrasts two kinds of Germany before the war. The gentle, industrious, religious Germany and the tough, fierce, cruel Germany. These two contrasts, the film says, were present before the war. Which is to predominate in the future? Marschieren, Marschieren! made by Renaissance Film and produced by Gerhard Born, says, quite simply, that everyone who marches to the beat of a military band and becomes hypnotized by martial music sooner or later marches to his death. Ich und Mr Marshall deals with the relations of the Marshall Plan in Western Germany.

Other films in production deal with life in Berlin, the free German Press, racial toleration, the air bridge and the Joint Import-Export Agency. All the films so far released arc well-paced polished one-reelers.

The British Film Section is inspiring films dealing with the day-to-day life of Germany, designed at once to make the public well-informed on current problems of the day, and to influence people to be more tolerant towards one another. Lebensadern is a documentary dealing with transport. It explains how the present difficulties arise. It points to difficulties overcome and it says that, given initiative, the German people have in themselves resources to bring the transport system back to the point of efficiency which was once the envy of Europe. The film ends with a moving ceremony of the first train to cross the repaired Hohenzollern Bridge at Cologne. Another film deals with returning prisoners-ofwar. It suggests that this problem is not being tackled as sympathetically as it might be by some Burgomeisters, already driven to distraction by shortages of housing. It puts in a claim for more sympathy, more tact and more practical treatment. A film in production on the raising of wrecks in Kiel harbour is as exciting a piece of documentary journalism as one will see anywhere. Yet another deals with the rehabilitation of the German fishing industry. At least one documentary worker of note has come up in the British Zone. His name is Rudolph Kipp. His shooting has a freshness and strength which

many a British documentary director and came raman will envy. Finally, one must not overlook the German workers in Berlin, mainly concentrating on trick films and labouring under the greatest of difficulties. Nevertheless, Lotte Reiniger is getting ahead with silhouette films and two other people are beginning to make remarkable progress. Hans Bölke is making puppet films, and the illustrator and artist, Frans Haakon, has begun to make cartoon films which show great promise.

No note about films in Germany can omit the newsreel Welt in Film. This is a joint Anglo-American affair, though produced almost wholly by German film men. The shooting is as good as any newsreel in the world. If by virtue of its position it avoids some political topics, its treatment of contemporary life in Germany has a raciness and quality of observation which puts it in a class by itself.

#### AN AMERICAN FILM

Round Trip. Producer: Raymond Spottiswood. Director: Roger Barlow. Produced by The World Today Inc. for 20th Century Fund.

20th Century Fund is an association in America which seeks to promote a liberal economic policy. It stands for free trade in America, for the lowering or total removal of tariff barriers. The film hopes to convince the Americans that American prosperity ultimately depends on the free flow of trade, and not in the artificial protection of inefficient industries in America, when it would be cheaper to purchase abroad and allow an inefficient industry to close down. Technically. the film takes the form of a trans-continental and trans-oceanic argument between an isolationist businessman, transport workers, producers and workers in Europe and Latin-America. The speakers call out to each other and argue, and the isolationist businessman is finally reduced by having his clothes and watch whisked away from him, since the former were made in Britain of British cloth and the latter in Switzerland. To an English mind, the arguments seem a little strange until one realizes that the film is flogging a horse which died in Britain about 1848. In short, America is now where Britain was a hundred years ago, and seeking to explain to herself that a country cannot sensibly be a creditor nation, and have tariff walls. The argument is as valid in America today as it was in Britain a hundred years ago. Technically, the film is well made. The characters are well cast and speak their minds with relish. The fact that dialogues take place across gaps of thousands of miles gives the film a kind of universality which stimulates the imagination. It is distributed in the States nontheatrically, and is not available in Britain.

#### **BOOK REVIEWS**

# The Film in Society

British Cinemas and Their Audiences: J. P. Mayer. (Dobson. 279 pp. 15s.).

The Negro in Films: Peter Noble. (Skelton

Robinson. 288 pp. 15s.).

Kierkegaard wrote: 'The Crowd is untruth'. The dictum implies that 'somewhat contemptuous attitude towards the masses', which Mr Mayer condemns in the other four writers and disclaims in himself. But no sociologist will agree that the crowd whom Mr Mayer has collected together for analysis in his book can tell the truth about British cinemas and their audiences. As sociology, the book is bad. It is slovenly, misleading and thoroughly unscientific. It is not about cinema audiences at all, but about a particular section of those audiences, the most vocal section, the cinema fans. What else is to be expected when the source of the author's information is a questionnaire addressed to the readers of Picturegoer?

Having said this, let us record, in deference to the preface, that we are familiar with Professor Allport's study on The Use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science, that we have referred to Mr Mayer's bibliography, have re-read his Sociology of Film, and carefully noted the quotations, historical and otherwise, which lend a certain pretentiousness to his text. In spite of all this it is impossible to maintain that Mr Mayer has made more than a superficial contribution to the study of the function and influence of the cinema in society. Such a work is of vital importance. It remains to be done.

To criticize the present book does not imply that its documents are uninteresting, even when seen as a cross-section of the views of British cinema fans. Very much more could have been done with them. They emphasize that one of the most compelling reasons for cinema attendance is the desire to escape from the realities of everyday life. Frequent assertions of this nature should have led a conscientious social scientist to investigate more deeply the causes of such behaviour. This would be an important contribution towards understanding the function of the cinema in our society.

The documents indicate that the early interest of children in the cinema frequently arises because adults, in order to see films themselves, have no alternative but to take their children with them. In this way a child of six weeks was taken to the cinema. The ages of two, three and four are often quoted as the age when films were first seen. This is an indication of the influence of social conditions upon film habits rather than of the influence of films on social habits. Once again, Mr Mayer does not face the implications. It is not only a question of more and better children's films and of raising the content of general film production from its present level. It is a question of more nurseries and crèches, more society, find their expression on the screen and

youth facilities, more and more alternatives to supplement the one recreational activity whither all too many children today must turn.

Again, the documents indicate, the extent to which films from America bring with them and spread, in this country and elsewhere, American ideas and conceptions of 'the American way of life'. How powerful is the impact of this medium, not only upon the cinematograph industries, but also upon the cultural independence of the countries most closely concerned! How little attention, relative to its importance, has this question received! Mayer ignores it.

If his audience selection is arbitrary, the author is equally arbitrary in his selection of films. Such a fault follows inevitably from the use of Picturegoer. He deals only with the influence of feature films and apparently excludes the influence of the documentary film in spite of the fact that its audience is rapidly growing and now exceeds an annual total of twelve million people.

A responsible study of cinema audiences surely involves an assessment of the attitude which the cinema has taken up on the important social questions of the day, whether it takes this attitude openly and clearly, as in documentary films, or more subtly, as in feature films. Only thus, can one reach any conclusion about the role and function of the cinema in contemporary society. Such an approach never seems to have occurred to Mr Mayer. He is too steeped in academic method and the academic outlook. Moreover, he seems to despair (p. 10) of the power of man to control the society of which cinematic art is so faithful a reflection. He writes: 'We are small wheels within a big machine. We are tools which others handle. We serve the machines, we perform routine duties without grasping the meaning of the whole. The complex rationality of the world of which we are a part, is torn from our instincts and sentiments. Beliefs—we no longer have.

Mr Noble measures the influence of the cinema against one of the great social problems of the day. He does so by examining the content of a large number of films which deal directly or indirectly with this problem. In spite of the fact that a social study of audiences lies outside the scope of his book, the evidence he presents and the conclusions which he draws are, we submit, of greater sociological significance than those of the professional sociologist whose work we have just reviewed.

The book demonstrates how an art reflects the material conditions of the society which gives rise to it. By tracing in films discrimination against the Negro race from early silent days until the end of the late war he shows in what way the real conditions of the American way of life, the fierce persecution of the Negroes in American elsewhere. He shows, too, how discrimination is reflected in other ways, limiting the freedom of the screen, and restricting negro film production.

The great weakness of the book lies in its extremely narrow approach to this problem. The author never steps outside its reflection in films and on the stage. Consequently, fortified by the author's own proposals, the reader is left with the impression that somehow the monstrous crime of the colour-bar can be fought, and perhaps conquered, in the relatively narrow sphere of art unrelated to the political and economic struggle outside this sphere. Mr Noble never explains the role of the colour-bar in present-day American society, nor does he make any really effective proposals for its eradication. Neither the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, nor the International Film and Radio Guild, nor the Independent Citizens' Committee, nor documentary films, nor personal letters to the Press, all of which he rightly indicates have a role in the fight. can do the slightest good unless they become a part of the whole struggle taking place in the world today, for or against the right of its citizens to live a full and free life.

If we approach the question in this way we throw into relief the other limitation in Mr Noble's approach. Not all the Negroes of the world and not the only colour-bar exist in the USA. True, he briefly indicates some of the ways in which colour prejudice gains expression in this country. But to represent, as he does, that it is only a secondary problem in Western Europe compared with America, is to ignore the implications of the colonial system, which find their expression in the cinema as in every other sphere of national life and which, in their total effect, are as evil as the discrimination practised in the Southern States.

The artificiality of much of contemporary film production is too well known to need emphasis here. The real conditions of the Negro peoples cannot be fully and truthfully portrayed because it would be such an indictment of the system under which they live. Hence their manner of living can only become a subject for documentary films, without explanation as to how the conditions portrayed came about, or be falsified in the now traditional treatment of Negro characters in most American feature films. In either case Negro susceptibilities are rightly injured.

The author emphasizes that everyone has a personal duty in combating the colour-bar, but his omission to place the problem in its proper context means that he can put forward no proper solution for the problem with which he deals.

In spite of its weakness, however, the book is a valuable weapon in a fight, which too often in this country we regard as no affair of ours.

# No Matter of Black and White

by
George Stoney

CHIEF CHARACTERS in Mr Noble's newest divertissement on films, named in ascending order of righteousness, are: Old Devil Hollywood, who, when he occasionally does something that seems admirable, is merely being two-faced; British Film-makers, often misguided but essentially Good; Foreign Film-makers, who form a seraphic chorus with those from the USSR singing most sweetly.

But patience a moment. Mr Noble has put into print for us the dilemma that greets anyone who sets out to make an honest and useful film

in which Negroes are to appear,

'The really ideal film,' he says, 'would be one in which Negroes and Whites are shown working together and living together in complete harmony, as neighbours, with only the occasional discords arising from any normal human relationships.' Then in the next sentence he asks for realism.

Again, after asking repeatedly that Negroes not be treated as special individuals on the screen, he says, '... the intelligent cinemagoer very naturally condemns all films which show the Negro in an unsympathetic light...,' Now, in Mr Noble's view any Negro who appears on the screen is, willy-nilly, also 'the Negro', no individual but a representative of his race. By massing quotations from the letters and reviews of Negro actors and intellectual leaders the author indicates that his remarks are a fair consensus of their opinions, too.

Illogical? Perhaps, yet Mr Noble illustrates through such contradictions the basic film reactions that cluster about this problem.

These reactions film-makers who are trying to make useful films in which Negroes appear must keep for ever at the front of their minds. This is especially important for cutters, since it is through what one might call 'psychosociological editing' (pardon the coinage!) that one can solve, or at least avoid, many of the difficulties raised not only by Negroes but by other groups whom society has caused to feel sensitive about the way they are represented on the screen.

Let us apply this to a familiar sequence in a documentary: You have a scene of rickety houses, ragged children, primitive toilet facilities, a scene which to you, the editor, says, 'Look how these poor people must live; something needs to be done'. Yet if there are Negro children shown the sequence may say to members of that race simply: 'Here is how typical Negroes live-like pigs.' And so it speaks to most white people, too, whether they live in London, Lagos or in the southern US where I make films. Negroes know this stereotype in most white minds all too well. (See, for example, the storm of protest from Londoneducated natives that greeted the showing in Lagos of This Modern Age-Nigeria.)

Editing can avoid many such reactions by prefacing the scene of slums with a contrast that features people of the same race or, as we do very often in our films for the southern US, use a scene with white people in slums immediately preceding that with Negroes. Thus the

condition rather than the race of the people shown is made the important thing.

Similarly the immediate reaction of an audience (particularly a hostile one) to the race of your character before they consider his individual personality or his actions can be avoided very often by introducing long or midshots in which he is shown doing something, e.g. long-shot of a school teacher who . . . (m.s.) happens to be a Negro; or (l.s.) a man in overalls . . . (m.s.) is loading a crane, and as we watch him (c.u.) he appears to be a Negro.

There is no rule-of-thumb for this kind of cutting. Most strangely, for example, what seems a perversely provocative cut in earlier sequences of a film becomes quite acceptable in its latter stages. This seems equally true for both White and Negro audiences.

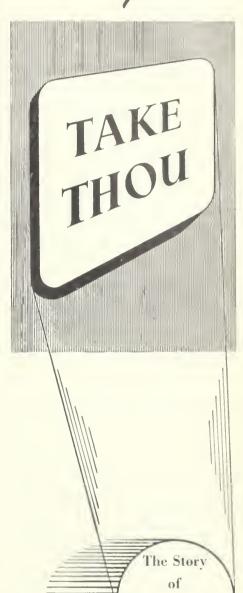
Thus the important thing for the film-maker to keep in mind is not just what appears to him true and obvious, but what the presentation of this visual truth will mean to his audience. Somehow he must take into consideration all the preconceptions, the stereotypes and prejudices that the viewers will add to what he, the film-maker, is going to put on the screen.

Though a protester against stereotypes and distorted pictures, Mr Noble indulges in these sins himself to a remarkable degree when he discusses America in general and the south in particular. Many statements he makes about film censorship in the south are simply untrue. He appears to think the censor in Memphis controls the film programmes for all of Dixie, which is about as true as saying that the 'Wee Frees' control the drinking habits of all Scotland.

Nowhere does he indicate a consciousness that the US has but ten per cent of the world's roughly 137,000,000 Negroes (of whom forty per cent live within the British Empire), for he concludes:

There is much ignorance and prejudice in the world concerning the Negro race and it is certainly the duty of the US Government to dispel this lack of knowledge....' True enough, yet leadership among all Negro groups must be developed before this can be done. The vast majority of Negro educators, scientists, artists, writers and intellectual leaders whose lives Mr Noble asks to see portrayed on the screen are found among America's ten per cent. The US was the training ground and home of all except two of the Negro actors whom he considers worthy of individual biographies, Judging by his own accounts, too, these men and women have had lives not unlike white members of their profession while the two actors drawn from the British Empire whom he gives honour could get a start in this country only after making names for themselves as professional wrestlers

... All of which goes to prove that the role of accuser becomes neither of us. (And it also proves, I note with amusement, how much 'psycho-sociological' cutting we southerners require!)



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# NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Trained to Serve. Crown Film Unit for the C.O.I. 1,457 *feet*.

Trained to Serve is the third in a series of COI made in Germany by Graham Wallace of the Crown Film Unit, working with German film technicians. The other two films were KRO Germany, 1947 and School in Cologne.

Contemporary films, when dealing with a situation that is possibly debatable, are inclined to be tepid in their approach. Facts are given, but not all the facts. In most cases there is a simplification of the problem, to the detriment of the whole. It was apparent in *One Man's Story*, and the same impression is left on the mind in *Trained to Serve*.

The film indicates that when hostilities ceased in Germany, there was no police force available that had been trained to serve the community as we understand it in this country. The German Police Force had been used as a heavy arm of the Gestapo, and it was necessary to recruit a body of men, and train them in the traditions of a democratic security force.

We are shown the black market, prostitutes, and juvenile delinquents, in fact the whole bag of tricks. Social problems being dealt with, even under the guidance of the Control Commission, do not necessarily contribute to social stability. This film says that the situation is difficult, but that everything is going to plan. Is it?

Artificial Insemination of Cattle. Made by Darlington Hall Film Unit for C.O.I. *Approx.* 900 *feet*.

Artificial Insemination of Cattle is an excellent film that can be fairly ealled a first-class instructional record. Artificial insemination, when applied to homo sapiens, has provoked considerable argument. Cows evidently have no scruples. As the film ably demonstrates, this is all to the good, because, with care and training, artificial means of reproduction enables the small farmer to build good class dairy herds and livestock, for the payment of 25 shillings service fee.

Prior to the introduction of this scheme, which is sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Farmers' Union, the quality of the dairy herds in this country was conditioned by the economic circumstances of the farmer. With the introduction of this plan there appears to be no reason why there should not be a progressive improvement in the value and quality of livestock.

Films of this nature can be dull, very dull, but this film tells its story in a straightforward and scientific manner, with excellent visuals and an unobtrusive commentary.

Hill Sheep Farm. Campbell Harper Films Ltd, for Department of Agriculture C.O.1. 20 *minutes*. 1,682 *feet*.

A film which demonstrates the urgent need to repopulate and refarm the Highlands of Scotland against a background of the destruction of Scottish sheep farming and the general decline of Scottish agriculture.

The shepherd's job is a skilled job, vital for all. This film shows how he wages his battle with nature almost single-handed. It leaves us regretting what might be done with help better planned and more generous than the Hill Farming Act provides. Direction and photography are good. The film moves rapidly and has a refreshing authenticity.

Scottish Universities. Data Film Unit for C.O.l. and the Scottish Home Department. *Director*: Francis Gysin. *Running time*: 22 *minutes*.

Unbelievably dreadful and pompous. The film moves in the manner of a tired professor, on whose behalf the commentator reads a lecture.

Most of the problems of university life receive a mention, which is about all that can be said in the film's favour—unless we add that its very dullness indicates in a negative kind of way how far behind the times our universities move. It is understood the Unit encountered many outside difficulties and conflicting opinions during production. They are reflected in the film.

#### AN AMERICAN FILM

Florida—Wealth or Waste. Produced by the Southern Educational Film Production Service. Written by George Stoney. Camera by Leo Seltzer. Length: 3 reels (?)

Those who have always regarded American documentary as lying somewhere between Chevrolet advertising films and the purity of Bob Flaherty will do well to examine the specifics of a modest self-confident little film called Florida—Wealth or Waste. Therein is to be found, among other things, that pleasing sense of gusto which comes, or used to, when producers embrace the difficult with enthusiasm, and when films, having taken on almost too much, arrive breathlessly at the end title, conscious of having done and said a good deal, and said and done it well.

Consider as sponsor, in general a Region, comprising six south-eastern states of the United States, and in particular the State of Florida with its jostling attributes and competing interests, its geography and climate, its forests and orange groves and farmlands and sponge beds and fisheries, and that most mystical and marvellous of all resources in the eyes of the Chamber of Commerce—the Tourist Trade.

Consider further that the legend which gives the State of Florida its special quality is the legend of limitlessness—of inexhaustible fertility, of expendable plenty, the bounteous extravagance of nature bestowing on native and tourist alike endless oranges, endless sunshine, endless sea beaches, with the Chamber of Commerce wisely adding its own bounty of endless parades, bands, board-walk attractions, bathing beauties and luxury hotels.

The Southern Educational Film Production Service, with grave and honest regard for the needs and interests of its sponsors, enters whole-heartedly into the picture postcard view of the state, moves soberly over the denuded devastated exploited farm and timber lands without reproaching any component part of the sponsors,

defines a Florida which is far from perpetual plenty, and begins decisively about the end of reel two to pull an educational film on conservation and the planning of resources out of all that has gone before.

Some of us may wonder that in the richest and most powerful nation on earth it is necessary to calculate the attitudes of conservation with such caution, and present them so deftly and carefully. But they are new attitudes to a country which has hitherto suffered little under reckless extravagance and the waste of its resources.

Nothing better can be said of a unit than that it truly understands its local and national problems, and that it finds as well the effective idiom to make that understanding prevail. Florida—Wealth or Waste by gearing the policy of conservation to the most local of needs has also done a good job for FAO in the United States. And while it is busy on the long slow task of creating new attitudes to resources, it contries at the same time to suggest that Negroes, given the potential of skills and opportunities, might also have something to contribute to the future of the south.

But for the audience which isn't concerned with how difficult it must have been to launch these particular arguments in this particular situation, it is anyway a good film to look at. It is a better piece of information for the United States than those expensive Voice of America broadcasts which prove that the New York Times is an objective newspaper and etcetera.

# BASIL WRIGHT

his vigorous and forthright

THE USE OF THE FILM

Basil Wright's title, The Use of the Film, reveals the angle of his approach, and whilst he has much to say about the actual making of films he bears in mind throughout that they are always made for some use or other. He covers concisely the nature of this great new mass medium, its enormous potentialities, the present position of Hollywood and the future of the British Film industry.

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THE BODLEY HEAD

# Gentlemen's Agreement

MR SAMUFL GOLDWYN recently resigned from the Motion Picture Association of America. On the strength of that resignation the following exchange of greetings took place between Mr Goldwyn and Mr Eric Johnston.

Mr Samuel Goldwyn said: . . . 'I have resigned from MPAA in order to give my undivided support to the interests of the Society of Independent Motion Picture Producers. . . The future of good motion pictures is completely bound up with the efforts of Independent Producers to bring this about.'

Mr Johnston said: . . . During his association with us Mr Goldwyn has demonstrated a unique flair of saying one thing and doing exactly the opposite. Mr Goldwyn's fabulous material success in the motion picture industry is irrefutable proof that free enterprise and free opportunity exist in a very real and positive way for all producers. Mr Goldwyn's statement is the latest example of his penchant for getting into violent disagreement with himself on all sides of a question.

Mr Goldwyn retorted: 'It is unfortunate for

the industry that Mr Eric Johnston's manners are as bad as his judgment. . . . During the period that Mr Johnston has been president the public relations of the industry have declined alarmingly. Mr Johnston's contributions to building fine relations has consisted mostly of turning the offices of the MPAA into a personal Press bureau for Mr Eric Johnston. This is not surprising in view of the fact that all this time Mr Johnston has been preening himself to accept call to public office. The overwhelming sitence of the public with respect to Mr Johnston's political ambitions has unfortunately not prevented him from devoting his major efforts to his personal objectives. As far as I have been able to observe Mr Johnston's chief contribution to the economic stability of the industry has been to give it such advice as has caused the filing of law suits against the MPAA and various of its members totalling some \$65,000,000—one of which has been decided against the company involved. The industry has survived many misfortunes and t am confident that it will survive Eric Johnston.'

## FESTIVAL 1951

THE BOARD of Governors of the British I ilm Institute have announced the appointment of Mr John D. Ralph as Executive Officer responsible for organizing the film side of the Festival of Britain, 1951.

Mr Ralph has been associated during the last five years with the National Film Board of Canada where he served in various capacities including Production Secretary and later as Director of Distribution. He was responsible for organizing the Board's extensive network of rural circuits and urban film libraries and developing the international distribution of Canadian films through theatrical and non-theatrical channels in Great Britain, France, United States, Australia and other countries.

Before joining the Board, he worked in radio, and films, as an actor, and later as a writer and commentator. He has also had experience in finance.

# VISUAL AIDS IN SCIENTIFIC & AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

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Film Society Movement in Australia-continued from page 5

All these libraries, like the State Film Centres. find the demand for films far and away beyond the possibilities of supply. Fortunately, however, the evergreen problem of broadening the scope of our programmes has recently been thoroughly tackled by the National Film Library. Last year a batch of 16 mm prints which included The Cabinet of Dr Caligari; The Battleship Potemkin; The Italian Straw Hat, and the Great Train Robbery was imported from the British Film Institute. These films had a rapturous reception, and came as a blood transfusion to the Society movement generally. Now we're all sniffing the air like Bisto Kids, waiting for a far larger batch already on the water, and reported to contain Birth of a Nation; The General Line; Mother; The Last Laugh; Menilmontant; The Scashell and the Clergyman, and many others too.

Gone for ever are the days when programme committees tore their hair, trying to decide between a mangled version of *Ten Days that Shook the World* and a 9.5 mm re-hash of *The Edge of the World*. Reared for so long on the hard feed of 'documentary-and-educational' the Australian Film Society movement is probably a little collar-proud at the moment, and apt to kick over the traces at the prospect of these long-dreamed-of exotic fruits. But their coming will not, I think, show a swing away from the realist film for long, but rather that fuller appreciation of the achievements, the complexities and the possibilities of the medium as a whole, which should be the aim of every I ilm Society.

Realist Tradition in Italian Films—continued from page 6

of poetic and realistic, other moments recall his *Finria*, the saga of a sex-starved wife of a horse-breeder who is the Italian counterpart of Miss Blandish.

Another film with a racial theme is Alberto Lattauda's Without Pity, featuring John Kitzmuller, who played the negro GI in To Live in Peace. Lattauda's best-known work is his 1945 documentary The Italian Army in the Liberation of the Country.

Of the directors known to us through films publicly shown in this country, Luigi Zampa is in process of completing Children of Chance for a British company; Rossellini is preparing the Rome sequence of A Tale of Five Cities; while Vittorio de Sica has just completed The Bicycle Stealers, with a largely non-professional cast. The film, the story of an Italian workman who has his bicycle stolen, has been bitterly attacked by L'Osservatore Romano (The Vatican newspaper) because it pokes fun at the holding of Mass.

Good intentions are such a novel state of the mind in the cinema that one may be forgiven for falling into the great error of thinking that is all a film needs, but as the hardening tradition of realism in the Italian cinema is formed into a more mature whole, more sure of itself the cinematic design of the Italian film is becoming stronger and abler. There is the quality of life in these films, there is a truth beside which a so-called human document such as Monsieur Vincent qualifies for Madame Tussaud's.

Film in Educational and Social Life—continued from page 4

schools where a beginning has been made in the teaching of film appreciation parallel with the teaching of literary appreciation. You may say that there are not enough good films-films suitable for the purpose. That argues a pessimism which I do not share. For if you turn not to the deliberately educational cinema, but to the vast cinema of fiction about which I began by speaking, there are enough serious, beautiful and exciting films, there are enough aesthetically stimulating passages even in unequal films, to form the basis for a hundred courses in the study of the screen. The Continental cinema and the America classics, Eisenstein and René Clair, Griffith and Chaplin - and today we have at last something of our own to offer. We have our versions of English classics-for the cinema reverts, overmuch indeed, to its early reliance on literary originals. We have our Dickens films. We have our Shakespeare films; and, whatever the controversy over Henry V and Hamlet, these two have taught us to look again at Shakespeare (the I rench, that acute race, realized before we knew it ourselves that Olivier had given us something new here: not a photographed stage play, but film-theatre). And we have a small group of simple and moving fiction films which, learning from the documentary, have set before us in terms at once realistic and poetic the life of our own country and our own people. Let us by all means use the cinema for factual instruction. But let us also use it to educate in the broadest sense of the word: to prepare and equip for life, and to do it through art, which is itself the distillation of life.

#### CORRESPONDENCE

February 15, 1949

DEAR SIR.

Referring to the polemic published in your last issue, I would be grateful if you would publish the following extract from my lecture\* on Len Lye's work.

'There is a gap of six years between *Tusalava* and *Colour Box*. I was then Grierson's right-hand man at the GPO Film Unit and I remember that Len Lye came to see us and said that he wanted to make a film without a camera. It took a lot of his personal charm to make us listen to him, but when he had explained what he wanted to do both Grierson and myself were convinced that he could do it. Grierson, that king of show-men, would not miss this opportunity. Furthermore, it sounded frightfully simple.'

I hope this will put a stop to an obvious and slightly unpleasant mis-construction of what I said in the lecture.

Yours sincerely

CAVALCANT1

\*Published in 'Sight and Sound'.

DEAR SIR,

Hoping, one day, to have a firm understanding of film art behind me I always make an effort to see the critics' point of view. But in the case of *Paisa* I just could not enthuse with them. Even the public seemed against me, for

it has obviously found 'something' in Paisa to keep it so long and so successfully at the Academy Cinema.

So Peter Brinson's article Rossellini and Us. Paisa provided the necessary support for me to persist in my opinion.

As Peter Brinson says, Paisa is the work of a master—a master of the documentary technique. It surprises me that this fact alone should have attracted the public, because none could admit to having been moved by the film. And after all its subject should move us. The subject and the technique cancel each other out.

Paisa has for its subject Emotion. The emotional impact of two peoples thrown violently together; the emotional reaction of the Italian, from urchin to priest, to the American soldier; the emotional reaction of the American soldier, from negro MP to OSS leader, to the Italian. Yet the way in which Rossellini has treated this subject has led critics to judge the film as a documentary of a military advance. Else why the childish carp about the anti-British attitude?

Readers of DOCUMENTARY FILM NEWS need no reminder that documentary is the objective technique which appeals to the brain in presenting facts and problems which can only be settled by clear thinking. When a director's subject is Emotion he must appeal to *our* emotions, he must make us *feel*. No one can *feel* when the cold-blooded wall of perfect documentary is down between the person and the subject. No one, not even Rossellini, can documentalize Emotion.

J. ELLIS PARK

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- 'Documentary treatment at its best.' FILM USER

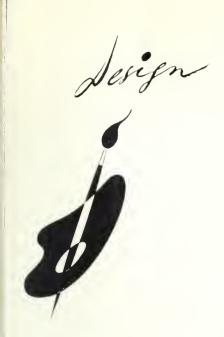
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MINING REVIEW

to the National Coal Board

DOCUMENTARY TECHNICIANS ALLIANCE LTD 21 SOHO SQUARE LONDON WI GERRARD 2826

Member of the Federation of Documentary Film Units

WAIT and SEE

The **PHOTOMICROGRAPHY** 

UNIT expects that the not inconsiderable results of its work, which has been steadily proceeding during the last three years, will be on the screen in 1949

# **CINE-BIOLOGY**

PHOTOMICROGRAPHY

D. Grayson, B.Sc.

Whitehall, Wraysbury, Bucks, and 9 Great Chapel Street, W.I

The Scottish critics, who should know, praise 'Waverley Steps' as a human and authentic film.

Some of the London critics have written about it in equally glowing terms.

The film cost half as much as one would imagine from the results on the screen.

See it for yourself.

The film is produced by Greenpark Productions, whose artists, directors and craftsmen have given you 'A String of Beads', 'Five Towns', 'They Gave Him the Works', 'Cyprus is an Island', and many more. There are many more to come.



In association with THE FILM PRODUCERS GUILD (Members of the Association of Specialized Film Producers)

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FILM CENTRE LTD.

187/168, Tottenham Court Road, London W.1.

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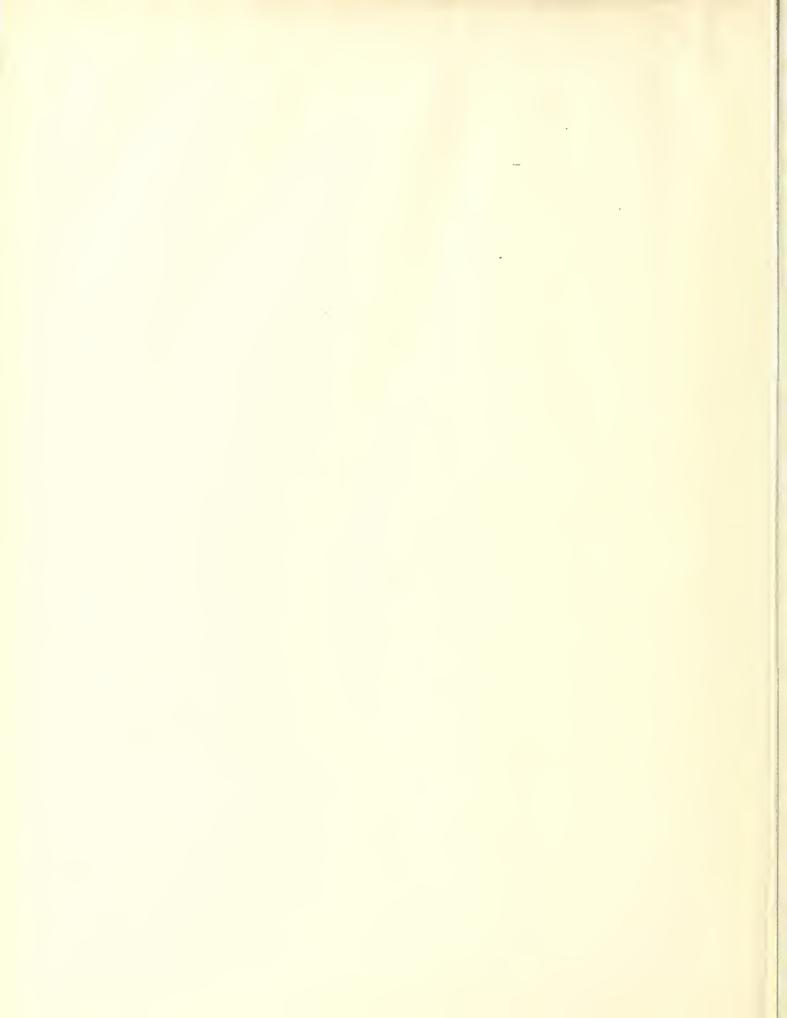
Dear Sir,

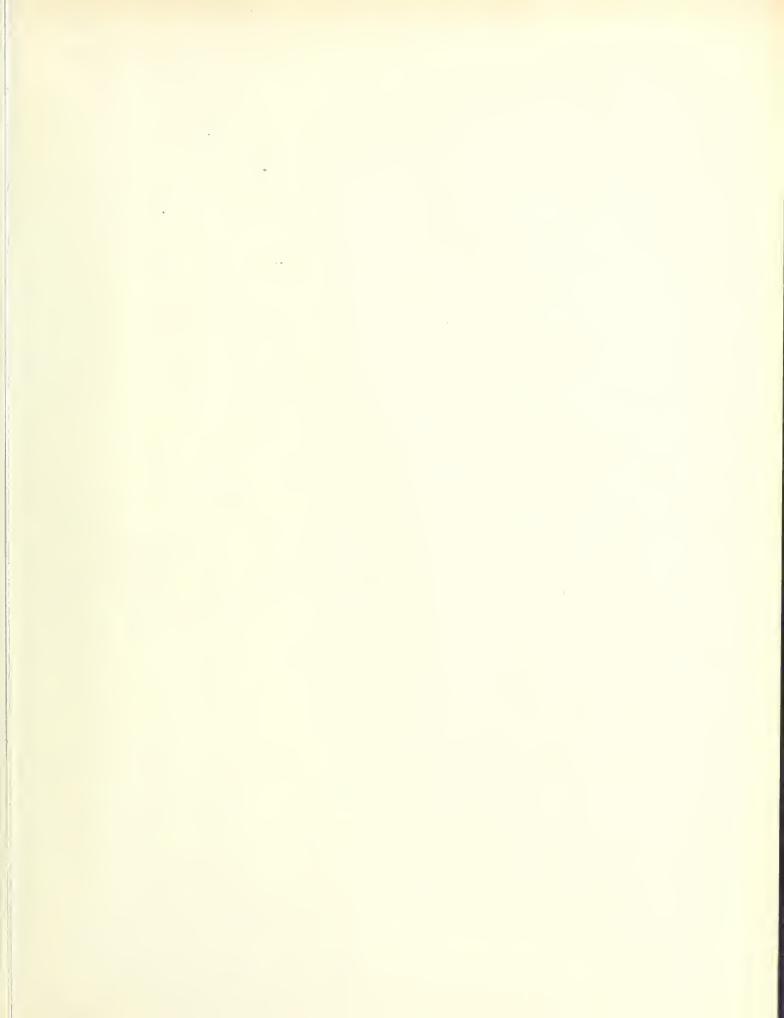
When the publication of <u>DOCUMENTARY FILM NEWS</u> was suspended in January 1949, it was the intention of Film Centre to continue their publication activities in a different form.

We are now publishing in association with Unesco a series of pamphlets, a list of which I enclose, on the use of films and filmstrips in fundamental education.

These pamphlets are available from Film Centre, and we would welcome your support in assisting us to obtain as wide a distribution as possible.

Yours faithfully. FILM CENTRE LAD.







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